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SACRED GROUND: THE USE OF RELIGIOUS RHETORIC IN
INAUGURAL ADDRESSES AND STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGES

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SACRED GROUND: THE USE OF RELIGIOUS RHETORIC IN
INAUGURAL ADDRESSES AND STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGES

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my sons, Max and Jake, who never cease to amaze me with their intelligence and wit; and to my wife, Cindy, who said yes.

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Chapter I

Presidential Rhetoric: “Going Pulpit”

Amazing Grace!

*How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.¹*

“Four score and seven years ago . . .”

“A date which will live in infamy . . .”

“Ask not what your country can do for you . . .”

“Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

From the earliest days of the American republic, and especially in the past century, presidents have used their rhetoric to lead the American people—using what Theodore Roosevelt called the “bully pulpit” to inform, inspire, encourage and unite the country. By motivating ordinary citizens, presidential rhetoric often shaped history.

When future presidents recite the Constitutional oath and assume office on January 20,² he (or she) will, in all likelihood, take the oath with his hand on a copy of the Bible.³ He will also deliver what we now refer to as an Inaugural Address. Millions of Americans together with leaders and citizens from around the world will anxiously anticipate the content of these remarks. His words will be analyzed and critiqued for style and substance. No doubt he will use this opportunity to paint broad strokes of his

¹ *Amazing Grace*, words by John Newton (1725-1807); music: Virginia Harmony; arr. Edwin O. Excelli (1851-1921).

² Under the Twentieth Amendment, the date of the Presidential Inauguration was moved from March to January 20. The last president to be inaugurated in March after an election year was Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933. After re-election in 1936, Roosevelt was the first president to be inaugurated under the new amendment on January 20, 1937.

³ For a list of Bibles used and scriptural passages chosen in previous inaugurations see Appendix B.

intentions with perhaps some vague references to policy initiatives. While there are similarities in many inaugural addresses regarding the content and length of the addresses, there are also differences. Some are long remembered and some soon forgotten. What seems certain is that the new president will utilize rhetoric of a religious nature either in the introductory portion of the address, to reference specific issues or proposals or in his concluding remarks. This rhetoric may be symbolic and used to promote a sense of unity with the American people. It may be used to focus attention and connect with specific difficulties facing America or solutions to those problems. These declarations may be specific references to verses contained in a Christian or Hebrew Bible or more generic in their content or tone. But the fact this rhetoric will be used at all emphasizes the changed nature of presidential rhetoric and the need for systematic study.

The significance of this research was evident in the 2008 campaign for president. There appears to have been an effort on the part of recent presidential candidates to emphasize a religious element to their campaigns as an electoral strategy. These efforts appear to have been primarily used by Republicans in the past, most notably Reagan and George W. Bush. However the current campaign also highlighted the tendency for other candidates including the Democratic frontrunners to emphasize a religious dimension to their backgrounds and the influence religion could have on their future actions as president.

It is not simply religious rhetoric that permeated recent presidential campaigns but substantive issues that contain, for many, a religious basis as well as the personal faith of the candidates. Article VI of the United States Constitution mandates that "...no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under

the United States.”⁴ The question remains, however, is there an informal religious test required to be successful as a candidate for president? Mitt Romney, a Mormon, was among the top tier of candidates for the Republican nomination. However, a quarter of Americans — Democrat, independent and Republican alike — said they would be less likely to vote for a presidential candidate who is Mormon. And those who indicate this reluctance have substantially lower favorable impressions of Mitt Romney.

A poll conducted by the Los Angeles Times and Bloomberg found that 35% of registered voters said they would not consider voting for a Mormon for president. As revealing as these findings are, being a Mormon is viewed as far less of a liability for a presidential candidate than not believing in God or being a Muslim. Roughly six-in-ten Americans (61%) say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who does not believe in God, while 45% say they would be reluctant to vote for a Muslim. At the same time, more people express reservations about voting for a Mormon (25%) than about supporting a candidate who is an evangelical Christian (16%), a Jew (11%) or a Catholic (7%).⁵ Only Islam would be a more damaging faith for a candidate than being a Mormon.⁶

Given this religious standard that appears to impact electoral behavior, research such as this analysis may help determine what effect, if any, increased use of religious rhetoric and the content of this rhetoric has on polarizing the electorate’s opinion regarding issues or a enhancing a candidate’s personal appeal.

⁴ Constitution of the United States, Article VI.

⁵ <http://pewforum.org/surveys/campaign08/>, accessed October 12, 2007.

⁶ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1562941,00.html>, accessed October 12, 2007.

Introduction

Presidential scholars have long noted the difficulty in developing testable generalizations regarding presidential action. Due to the “small-n” problem and the unique conditions and circumstances (domestic and foreign) that confront each presidential administration, presidential research is often grounded in studies of individual presidents or events. However there is much to be learned about the office of the presidency and the occupants by studying, as a group, the forty-two individuals who have held the office prior to the inauguration of Barack Obama. To understand the modern presidency, Skowronek asserts, we must understand the way it parallels, as well as differs from, the historical presidency (Skowronek 1995). Circumstances change. The relationship between the branches of government has remained in a state of readjustment. Many believe that the presidency has been the beneficiary of a redistribution of power.

Skowronek reminds us that it is easy to get lost in presidential history. Each story, each event and each action presents itself as distinctive and therefore makes any quest for generalization difficult. As scholars, we must look to particular traits, qualities or behavior of individual presidents in order to probe and understand the occupant as well as the office itself. Are there patterns of behavior that will allow us to better understand the nature of the presidency? Can we identify systematic change that persists from one president to the next? Are there trends that make certain actions or rhetoric more likely to appeal to a majority of the electorate at a given time? This study seeks to examine those questions on one dimension—presidential rhetoric.

Neustadt’s classic work *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* is an example of the view that it was the particular skill of the president—for Neustadt that

skill was the power to persuade—that defined his presidency and determined his effectiveness. Neustadt’s groundbreaking work was the cornerstone of presidential research for generations of scholars. During the past two decades, however, the conceptual foundations of presidential studies have undergone significant change. Previous foundations for studying the presidency were often grounded in formal institutional arrangements and focused on interactions among institutional elites. More recent efforts have produced scholarship that frames presidential politics more as a direct relationship between the president and the people at large. Works by Jeffrey Tulis (1987), Theodore Lowi (1985) and Samuel Kernell (2007) are examples of this new focus.

Some work analyzing the presidency has asserted that presidents have changed their strategy for affecting policy. Kernell posited that presidents have adopted an approach that bypasses the Washington elites and take their message directly to the people to affect policy and achieve their goals (Kernell 2007). Kernell cites, for example, Wilson’s ill-fated speaking tour to rally support for the Treaty of Versailles in September, 1919, as heralding a new approach to presidential governance. For Kernell it signaled a shift from the focus on what we would now refer to as “beltway insiders” to a broader appeal to the general public. While some might argue that this new strategy was more illustrative of contemporary political reality than Neustadt’s premise, I would assert that what Kernell describes is not a new presidential strategy—it is simply a new audience. Instead of persuading the few (Washington elites) presidents were now intent on persuading the many.

As Kernell points out the rapid advance in communication and transportation technology has enabled presidents to expand their ability to communicate with a larger and larger audience. Any (and every) president has access to modern communication technology. Every contemporary president can command an audience that stretches far beyond the limitations of time and distance faced by earlier presidents. It is not merely the use of this new technology but the *effective* use of these improvements in communication and transportation that defines the success or failure of this new approach.

Given the rise in candidate centered elections (Wattenberg 1991), one can certainly argue that the new focus serves multiple purposes. Not only do the attempts to “go public” enable presidents to shape or influence policy decisions by directly and indirectly attempting to “persuade” legislators, it also serves to bolster their electoral success.

Successful leaders do not necessarily do more than other leaders—successful leaders control the political definition of their actions (Skowronek 1995, 517). One method to define their actions is through the effective use of rhetoric. Presidential rhetoric has become the ‘snapshot’ through which a great majority of Americans view presidents. It shapes our perceptions of presidents and molds our expectations. If a certain style or content of that rhetoric is more likely to evoke a positive response from the public, an understanding of that relationship will help characterize presidential action.

Statement of the research problem

Comparing the rhetoric employed by Washington or Jefferson with that of Truman or Reagan may seem unusual. However, examining the use of religious rhetoric

allows us to discover something basic in a president's approach to presidential leadership in spite of contemporary advances in communication technology. An analysis of the frequency and content of religious rhetoric and whether the use of religious rhetoric has changed over time should allow us to better understand something fundamental about the way the institution of the presidency has evolved both in the view of the individual president and the electorate. Scholars have recognized the emergence of a presidency grounded in the use of rhetoric to influence public opinion. Examination of religious rhetoric, specifically, will augment those efforts by establishing another layer of analysis as to the content of rhetoric and the motivation for use by individual presidents.

Once the examples of religious rhetoric have been identified in the source documents, the rhetoric is analyzed based on certain variables (whether the president is a Democrat or Republican, first term with an anticipated reelection campaign or second term, whether the message was delivered during time of war, etc.). Rhetoric will be examined to determine if it is explanatory for five hypotheses.

- 1. Use of religious rhetoric in Inaugural Addresses and State of the Union messages has increased.**
- 2. Presidents employ religious rhetoric that is increasingly more specific and more Christian in content.**
- 3. Republican presidents use religious rhetoric more than Democrats.**
- 4. Religious rhetoric will decrease during a president's second term.**
- 5. Religious rhetoric will increase during a time of war.**

Based on the rhetoric of recent presidents most observers would opine that the use of religious rhetoric has increased during the past three decades. In order to avoid being inappropriately influenced by recent history we must analyze the full range of rhetoric

since 1789. Hypothesis number one is that the use of religious rhetoric has increased over time.

The First Amendment to the Constitution provides for freedom of religious practice and prohibits the establishment of a national religion. Article VI prohibits a religious test to hold political office. One might expect that any rhetoric of a religious nature employed by a president would tend to be neutral without reference to a specific religion or belief. Yet we often hear comments that America is a “Christian” nation and the Founders established a framework that embodied “Christian principles.” Hypothesis number two is that, over time, religious rhetoric has become increasingly “Christian” and has employed more specific references to a particular sacred text or practice.

Given the contemporary perceptions that Republicans are more likely to be influenced by the electoral power of socially conservative Christians (sometimes referred to as the Christian Right), hypothesis number three is that modern Republican presidents will use religious rhetoric more often than Democrats. Most observers posit that the Christian Right plays a significant role in the Republican Party especially in the presidential nominating process (Oldfield 1996). Lind argues that during the 1980s Christian conservatives were one of a half-dozen groups in Reagan’s coalition, whereas by 2000 the preeminence of these individuals had “relegated to the sidelines” all other Republican Party factions (Lind 2001). One can certainly argue with Lind’s conclusion that other factions in the Republican Party had been “relegated to the sidelines” since other groups remained prominent in the Republican coalition. Groups such as the NRA and other gun rights advocates, fiscal conservatives, certain elements of the healthcare establishment and business management groups, among others, remained very active. It

is difficult, however, to deny the dominance both in appearance and effect the Christian Right had achieved.

Given the historical tendency of Republican presidents to articulate conservative social values and survey data that shows traditionalist religious support for Republican candidates one would expect Republican presidents to reflect those values and positions through the use of specific, religious-laced rhetoric. Of course the Republican Party has only existed since 1854 and the first Republican president was Abraham Lincoln. One can also argue that the Republican party of Lincoln bears little resemblance to the Republican party of today. In addition the influence of the Christian Right is generally regarded as becoming electorally important during the 1970's and especially in the 1980 presidential campaign and thereafter. For this reason, as we examine hypothesis number 3 particular attention will be paid to Presidents Carter through George W. Bush along with the historical analysis of all Republican presidents.

Presidents are, after all, politicians. All new presidents will inevitably begin to think about reelection. Maintaining or expanding the electoral coalition that brought him to the White House will be a priority. If the intention of a president is to enhance his reelection efforts through the use of religious rhetoric then hypothesis number four is that the use of religious rhetoric is greater in the first term of the president—particularly in the twelve months preceding his reelection. After a president is inaugurated a first time and begins to think of re-election it would seem natural that rhetoric would be used to maximize support from those groups deemed to be essential to his re-election. Presidential advisor Karl Rove noted the less than expected turnout among certain religious groups in the 2000 election and targeted conservative Christians in his strategy

to re-elect George W. Bush in 2004. If energizing electoral support is his primary incentive a president may use less religious rhetoric once the re-election campaign has been won. However, we may see that a president will continue to use such rhetoric in order to mobilize support for policy initiatives.

Due to the circumstances that are distinctive to periods of war, it could be argued that presidents will use religious rhetoric in an attempt to inspire the citizenry for the hardships associated with war time or to justify the war in terms that would be acceptable to large segments of the country. Presidential war rhetoric “constitutes the audience as a united community of patriots” and has been seen as enlarging the president’s freedom of action (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, III, 126, 215). Further, religion is often a source of comfort for individuals in times of adversity and the use of religious rhetoric might be intended to provide that comfort. Hypothesis number five is that presidents will use religious rhetoric more during periods of war than in periods of peace.

As noted in the subsequent sections, defining a period of war can be difficult. As the United States has engaged in “undeclared wars” it becomes increasingly difficult to analyze rhetoric for this hypothesis. In addition, rhetoric may be shaded by the looming clouds of war prior to an actual military action. Certainly FDR’s rhetoric was influenced by circumstances that were bringing the United States closer to actual entry into World War II prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Lincoln’s Second Inaugural took place as the Civil War was effectively over but Lee’s surrender would not take place until a month later. As I discuss this hypothesis in the following sections I will explore the parameters of my definition of a war period.

Methodology/Procedure

Presidential rhetoric was examined from two sources:

1. Inaugural addresses; and
2. State of the Union messages.

State of the Union messages and Inaugural addresses were selected because they are given at regular intervals, are typically given significant media and public attention, and provide a mix of the celebratory rhetoric and purposeful policy rhetoric. Each inaugural address and each State of the Union message from George Washington to George W. Bush was analyzed.⁷ Content analysis was utilized to examine religious rhetoric, including specific religious references and metaphors contained in these messages as defined by explicit coding rules as follows:

CODING RULES

Sentences are counted separately. If a sentence contains one or more references it is counted as a single reference. If several references are contained in a single paragraph, however, each reference/sentence is counted separately.

Specific: references to the Bible, a Bible verse or chapter; or a quote from the Bible (whether specifically identified or not); referencing or quoting a religious hymn; references to “God,” “Christ” or “Christianity.” Also references to other specific religious faiths, i.e. “Islam” or “Muslim.”

Policy-related: references that mention a specific policy or program and are couched in religious terms or use a religious basis for the policy or initiative.

General: references to “Providence,” “a higher power” or other similar language without a specific reference to a particular religious foundation (Bible, scripture, hymn, etc.)

⁷ The inaugural address of Barack Obama will be analyzed and referenced in the concluding chapter.

This analysis allows rhetoric to be categorized as either: (1) specific, (2) policy-related or (3) general. This analysis and classification will then be utilized to examine the different uses of religious rhetoric both by frequency and type. Specific references may not be employed in a context that demonstrates an attempt to mobilize support for specific policy initiatives but it might operate to give an address an overall quality or tone. By separating religious rhetoric in this manner we can examine whether the rhetoric is explicitly tied to a particular intent by the president.

The purpose behind the use of some religious rhetoric will be obvious. It may also be indicative of diverse motivations. For example, if a president uses religious language to define a specific issue or to advocate for or against a specific policy (i.e. school prayer or embryonic stem cell research), his purpose may be to influence the policy agenda, enhance his electoral strategy or both. A president's motivation to use some religious rhetoric will be more difficult to ascertain. Examination of the rhetoric as it relates to the five hypotheses might reveal clues to that motivation.

Theoretical Significance

Scholarly research involving the presidency has evolved over the years to include more focus on the individual president and the relationship between the president and the people. While the use of religious rhetoric is not new to the presidency, the use of such rhetoric has varied over time. While the specific "God Bless America" is now an almost mechanical concluding remark for presidential speech, it was not always so. If we can determine that there are variables that contribute to the use of religious rhetoric, we should be able to predict the circumstances that would make religious rhetoric more appealing to the voting public and, thus, influence the use of religious rhetoric by

candidates and presidents. Hopefully, we can gain a fuller and richer perspective on the development and variety of popular presidential leadership in the United States. A comprehensive examination of presidents' use of religious rhetoric over time should help us understand not only presidential strategy in employing the rhetoric but also the acceptance or expectations of such language by the American people.

In a governmental system that provides for a separation of powers and checks and balances between the branches of government, the presidency has gained a preeminent role in the United States. Circumstances and the force of individual presidents have combined to elevate the presidency to a point that scholarly examination is essential. Probing the use of religious rhetoric could enlighten our understanding of the office and occupants. It might also tell us something about the broader societal implications of such rhetoric. Do presidents use this rhetoric more in times when there are increasing signs of religious fervor? As society has become more modern, does the use of this rhetoric reflect a unifying spirit that calms and comforts our fears of the rapidly advancing and unknown future? Has America become, as a society, more isolated from each other as Putnam describes (Putnam 2000)? If so, does the use of rhetoric that connects with a broad segment of the population serve to bring us together by connecting with a common heritage or set of beliefs?

As noted subsequently, scholars have attempted to define presidential action and the evolving nature of presidential power. Neustadt, Lowi, Kernell, Skowronek and many others have theorized as to the motivations and resources available to presidents. This study can supplement and, in some ways, bring those previous studies together in a way that expands our understanding of the presidency.

But I would suggest it is broader than simply presidential research. It can tell us something about the ever changing nature of the federal system. It may tell us how the branches of government interact and the expectations for each. It can tell us something about societal evolution and the role of religion in our society. The theoretical significance is broad and far reaching.

Highlights from the literature

The Rhetorical Presidency

Representative democracy has been described as being essentially cultivated by public speech, by political discussion that can only take place in the legislature and local community (Milkis 1995, 490). The use of rhetoric that resonates with the public and helps to legitimize a president's program can be a powerful weapon. Leaders who use rhetoric that evoke pictures, sounds, smells, tastes and other sensations tap more directly into followers' life experiences than do leaders who use words that appeal solely to followers' intellects (Emrich et al. 2001, 529). These life experiences might include a sense of faith shared by other Americans. The use of rhetoric that evokes a certain response can connect the listener to the orator in a way that generates support for the speaker and his message.

One of the early works assessing the rise of presidential rhetoric was the Ceaser, Thurow, Tulis and Bessette article first published in 1981. Ceaser, et al., traced the development of this general trend in presidential speech from the 1800s, when presidents rarely addressed the general public on policy issues, to the 1900s when such public pronouncements became routine. These public appeals were perceived by presidents and others to be effective and came to be expected by the public. Ceaser, et al. posited that

most recent Presidents believe they were not being “effective leaders unless they constantly exhorted the public” (Ceaser, et al. 1987, 4).

Expounding on this work was Jeffrey Tulis’ own work on presidential rhetoric. Tulis challenges what were common explanations for the institutional development of the presidency. He argues that since the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, popular or mass rhetoric has become a principal tool of presidential governance (Tulis 1987, 4). Tulis views presidential rhetoric as both a reflection and an elaboration of underlying theories of governance (Medhurst 1996, 202). Tulis has gone so far as to argue the American presidency and this emphasis on rhetoric and the attempt to persuade has evolved into a full-time propaganda machine during the past century (Hart 2002, 694). Tulis’ approach was widely viewed as being an important addition to presidential research and was seen as a “potent tool for a cultural interpretation of American politics” (Skowronek 1987, 431).

Beneath the differing policies of Democrats and Republicans and varying abilities of individual presidents to secure partisan objectives, Tulis notes, lies a common understanding of the essence of the modern presidency—rhetorical leadership. Prior to this century, presidents preferred written communications between the branches of government to oral addresses to “the people.” The relatively few popular speeches that were made differed in character from today’s addresses. Most were patriotic orations for ceremonial occasions, some raised constitutional issues, and several spoke to the conduct of war (Tulis 1987, 5).

But with the geographic and population expansion of the republic and an evolution in the office of the presidency that elevated the presidency in stature and

power, the character and functions of rhetorical appeals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries underwent a dramatic shift. These changes included the number of messages, the kinds of addresses that were offered, and the kinds of arguments that were contained in presidential messages (Tulis 1987, 21).

Since the publication of *The Rhetorical Presidency*, scholars have examined the construct presented by Tulis to amplify, challenge or contradict the idea of a rhetorical presidency. Works by Kernell (1986), Hart (1987), Ryan (1988), Campbell and Jamieson (1990), Stuckey (1991), Medhurst (1996), Ellis (1998), Dorsey (2002) and Laracey (2002), among others, have sought to analyze the rhetorical presidency.

Scholars have argued that the phenomenon of presidents increasingly taking their message directly to the people, bypassing Congress and the Washington elites, is due to advances in communication technology, which permits instant and widespread access to the public, and to modern advances in transportation. While it was once impossible for Presidents to reach a mass audience with their message, today's communication technology, including radio, television, and the Internet, enables a President to reach a targeted audience or listeners/viewers countrywide or worldwide. While it was once physically impossible for a president to effectively travel throughout the country (or the world) to personally deliver an address or rally support, modern transportation makes this not only possible but convenient (Kernell 2007, 130-131). Other scholars have argued that presidential rhetoric is one source of institutional power, "enhanced in the modern presidency by the ability of presidents to speak when, where, and on whatever topic they choose, and to a national audience through coverage by the electronic media" (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 3). These advances have clearly expanded opportunities for

presidents to employ rhetoric that speaks directly to the public in unique ways. These increased opportunities would also make it imperative for presidents to carefully craft their rhetoric to achieve optimal effects.

Kernell further contends that this trend of bypassing the traditional Washington establishment is due to the realities of American politics—the decline of parties, the weakened role of institutional leadership in Congress and the rise of divided government (Kernell 2007, 10-11, 71). However, recent political history has seen a resurgence of parties and strong institutional leadership in the Congress. With the takeover of Congress by the Republicans in 1994 and the election of Bush⁴³ in 2000 we had a period of unified government. We lapsed into another era of divided government when Democrats regained control of Congress in 2006. With the election of Obama and the increased Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress we now have another period of one-party control. It would be imprudent to suggest these events have resulted in a return to fewer public appeals by the president. It would appear that the rhetorical presidency is here to stay. Indeed the Obama presidency appears poised to set new standards for the use of rhetoric. Obama's use of ever expanding technologies such as internet social networking sites and his speaking prowess could very easily define expectations for presidential rhetoric for the next generation just as John Kennedy did in the 1960s.

While the reasons for the use of a specific style of rhetoric or content may be the subject of some debate, there can be little dispute that American Presidents have increasingly decided to “go public” to promote or justify policy positions or initiatives. With this increasing use of the “bully pulpit,” the amount of literature analyzing this development and the need for additional research on the subject has also increased. With

the increase in religious rhetoric we can now assert that contemporary presidents have decided to “go pulpit” in their rhetoric.

Since the early work by Tulis and others, there has been an increasing focus on presidential rhetoric by political scientists and speech communication specialists. Despite this increased study, there remains little empirical, quantitative work on the power, content or motivation of presidential rhetoric (Stuckey and Antczak 1998).

As the use of rhetoric by presidents has flourished, scholars have increasingly examined the content and frequency of presidential rhetoric for an understanding of the modern presidency. As Robert E. Denton and Dan F. Hahn have noted, the language used by a president serves to both stimulate and justify political actions. It can “inspire, comfort and motivate the nation . . . provide the feeling of a human relationship with our leader . . . encourage justice or injustice . . . their words have encompassed our grief (Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address), given us hope (FDR’s first inaugural address), and challenged us to address the task at hand (Kennedy’s inaugural)” (Stuckey 1990). Words and symbolic speech can be a powerful tool for presidents: “They inspire, persuade, enrage, [and] mobilize. With words minds are changed, votes acquired, enemies labeled, alliances secured, unpopular programs made palatable...Through words some of the most potent forces of modern politics are wheeled into motion” (Rodgers 1987, 4). Of course, some presidents are more effective in their use of rhetoric. Current events or presidential approval might help determine the salience and effectiveness of individual speeches. Further analysis of rhetoric can only serve to enhance our understanding of the presidency.

Use of Religious Rhetoric

Religious references can be some of the most potent forms of rhetoric. For many Americans religion has been a strong component of their political socialization. The uses of modern scientific or medical advances are often in conflict with religious beliefs or opinions. Religion can provide a unique connection between the rhetoric and the listener. The first step in this analysis is to examine whether there has been an actual increase in the use of religious rhetoric by presidents over time.

Why would a president choose a certain style or content for his rhetoric? Most observers would acknowledge that the public, generally, is inattentive to politics. Kernell contends that when presidents speak, fewer and fewer citizens are paying attention (2007, 234). While it may be necessary for a president to speak in substantive terms to gain the public's attention, presidential rhetoric itself may serve to motivate the electorate to 'pay attention' and to help shape their opinions. The status of the presidency and the public's reliance on the individual president as the symbol of the federal government makes anything the president says important and influential for those who do listen. Certainly, few would disagree with the assertion that the president's words are more prominently transmitted and repeated than those of any other politician or office holder (Coe 2007, 376). But it is not the words alone that can be important. Symbolic appeals alone may influence the public's agenda (Cohen 1995). Religious language or symbols may heighten that influence to specific groups or segments of the population. Ann Ruth Willner conducted case studies of world-class charismatic leaders and concluded that Biblical imagery, metaphors, folk tales, rhyme, and repetition were critical to their "rhetorical spellbinding" (Willner 1984, 152).

Many Presidents have used religious references or metaphors in their public pronouncements. Some have used references of a general nature, addressing a “Creator” or a “higher power.” Some Presidents have used rhetoric that appears to be specifically targeted to a segment of the public that is more conservative, more Christian and designed to motivate those individuals to support particular policies or to vote to re-elect the President. Utilizing a systematic analysis we can determine whether the use of this particular style of rhetoric was designed to accomplish the Presidential objectives of establishing or motivating support for policy proposals or enhancing their prospects for re-election.

As noted, the use of this religion-laced rhetoric is not a new phenomenon. Such statements have been found in presidential pronouncements since Washington. For example, even the very basic use of the word “God” has occurred 10,833 times in the major papers and speeches of the President since 1789.⁸ Interestingly, however, the first invocation of the word “God” in an inaugural address did not occur until 1821 in James Monroe’s second inaugural address when he closed with a comment on his “reliance on the protection of Almighty God.” A reference would not be included again until Franklin Pierce’s assertion in 1853 that our national security depended on the “. . . nation’s humble, acknowledged dependence upon God and His overruling providence.”⁹ Overall a reference to “God” has been invoked in 36 inaugural addresses including the last

⁸ This information was obtained using the search capacity of The American Presidency Project (americanpresidency.org), established in 1999 as a collaboration between John Woolley and Gerhard Peters at the University of California, Santa Barbara, accessed May 11, 2009.

⁹ John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>; accessed October 2, 2008.

eighteen. Usage of the word “God” and other allusions to a Divine Power in inaugural addresses will be examined in more detail in Chapter 2.

Regarding the use of the word “God” in an Annual Message or State of the Union Address, it was again Monroe who first used this word in 1824 when, in his eighth annual message to the Congress, Monroe asserted that America owed advances in foreign relations, agriculture, navigation and revenue to “...Almighty God, from whom we derive them, and with profound reverence, our most grateful and unceasing acknowledgments.” It raises the question: why was Monroe, our fifth president, the first to use the word “God” in either of these two significant occasions of presidential rhetoric? Was Monroe more ‘religious’ than his predecessors or did current conditions encourage the use of a more specific reference to a Deity? Overall, the word “God” has been invoked in 30 written Annual Messages and 49 times in 52 orally delivered messages. Woodrow Wilson was the first to include it in an oral Message in 1914.¹⁰

Presidents have also used numerous other terms to refer to a God-like entity. Beyond the use of the word “God” they have used references to “Providence,” the “Almighty Hand” and “Ruler of the Universe” among others. Most prominent has been the use of the word “Providence” which has appeared in 64 State of the Union messages and 17 inaugural addresses.¹¹ Most recently the word was used by George W. Bush in his 2005 State of the Union address when he stated: “The road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable—yet we know where it leads; it leads to freedom” (Bush 2005).

While it is important to understand their motivations, it is also important to understand what may contribute to the underlying foundation for a President’s use of

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

specific rhetoric. Hart (2002) has argued there are six reasons or forces that contribute to the substance of most presidential rhetoric. These include: biographical, philosophical, cultural, institutional, temporal and mediated. Of note for purposes of this study is what Hart describes as biographical and temporal forces. It should not be surprising that the life experiences of a President become engrained in his beliefs, his thought process and his public speech. His ethnicity, his family ties, his schooling, his religious and regional background all contribute to a president's rhetoric and all leave their traces on his subsequent rhetoric (Hart 2002, 697). Hart does not delve as deeply into the psychological foundations of presidential actions as scholars such as James David Barber did in his classic work *The Presidential Character* (1977), or George and George in their analysis of Woodrow Wilson (1964), but Hart concludes each political figure is the product of his/her own unique experiences resulting in a distinctive "rhetorical signature."

Other scholars have explored some of the religious influences on particular presidents. Stephen Vaughn, for example, wrote of the influence the local Church of Christ in Dixon, Illinois and their minister, Ben Hill Cleaver, had on the development of Ronald Reagan and the values he brought to the presidency. These values were often expressed in his policies and public pronouncements (Vaughn 1995, 109).

As the Framers met in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787 to develop a new system of government there was concern over the possibility a strong national government could result in establishment of a national religion. There were numerous provisions in state constitutions regarding established religion and various mechanisms that allowed support for various denominations. Madison's intent when he introduced

what would become the First Amendment was to prohibit the establishment of a “national” religion. One might argue the extent to which politics and religion have been separated in the American system, but one can hardly argue that the Framers did not want the national government or the head of the executive branch of that government to assume a role as the “defender of the faith” or a leader or advocate for any particular religion. Why, then, would Presidents invoke the rhetoric of religion in their public pronouncements? And, when they do, is such use effective in communicating a specific message or providing a general cloak of credibility?

Presidents are assigned various roles by our system of politics and governance. He is regarded as and described as the chief of state, chief executive, chief legislator, chief diplomat and commander in chief. The religious realm is one of the few areas of contemporary life in which a leadership role has not been assigned to the president. The Founding Fathers rejected the historical pattern of combining political and religious authority where secular leaders were also the Defenders of the Faith. Instead they committed themselves and the new nation to religious freedom, prohibited the requirement of a religious test to hold office [Article VI] and used the first set of amendments to the new Constitution to limit Congressional ability to establish a national religion or prohibit the free exercise of an individual’s chosen religion [1st Amendment].

Despite the lack of a formal religious role under our Constitution, presidents spend a considerable amount of time performing what can be considered religious functions—they issue proclamations for national religious observances,¹² participate in

¹² Washington was the first president to issue a proclamation calling for a day of thanksgiving and prayer. Washington, responding to a request from Congress, issued the proclamation on October 3, 1789. Washington asserted “...it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor.”

religious ceremonies and communicate regularly with leaders of churches and denominations and related groups. The religious role has taken on more significance as the Presidency has grown in influence and power (Gustafson 1970). Clinton, for example, has been described as a “Universal Pastor” primarily as a result of his use of religious rhetoric (Linder 1996). Hart has gone so far as to state, “[W]hen an American president is inaugurated, he is also ordained” (Hart 1977, 9). An analysis of rhetoric may conclude that presidents, in addition to their many other hats, have also assumed the role of Pastor-in-Chief.

As noted, the American Founders recognized the need for a prohibition against the national government, i.e. Congress, establishing a national religion. There was less reluctance for states to continue to recognize or support particular religions. Over time the basic principle of disestablishment (or prohibition of establishment) engrained in the federal constitution has become an accepted tenet of the American creed in most respects. However, many public officials and courts have disagreed on exactly the parameters of this separation. Despite this disagreement any attempt to assign to the President or for him to assume responsibilities in the spiritual realm would seem to be a direct challenge to this principle (Fairbanks 1981). Bellah argues, however, that there exists alongside of and clearly differentiated from the organized churches in America an elaborate and well-institutionalized civil religion in the United States (Bellah 1967). It would appear from

Washington ‘recommend[ed]’ that citizens devote November 26th to the “service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be...” He called on the people to “unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations...” to “pardon our national and other transgressions” and to enable “us all” to perform “our several and relative duties properly and punctually,” and to make the national government a “blessing to all the people” as a government of “wise, just, and constitutional laws.” Among other requests, Washington asked citizens to pray for God “to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue.”

the use of religious rhetoric that presidents have assumed a role as “pastor-in-chief” that is distinctive from Bellah’s characterization of civil religion. Bellah’s construct involved more than appeals to what would be considered “religion” as that phrase is commonly used. References to founding documents, republican virtues or other aspects of societal beliefs are not included in this study and are separate from what I argue is a new trend in religious rhetoric.

Beyond “Civil Religion”

As noted, the First Amendment’s establishment clause and free exercise clause combined with the prohibition in Article VI for a religious test to hold public office would appear to create some degree of the “wall” espoused by Roger Williams and hailed by Jefferson in his letter to the Danbury Baptists. However, this separation of church and state has not denied the political sphere what can be characterized as a religious dimension. This public religious dimension is often expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals and has been labeled civil religion. As defined by Bellah the phrase civil religion comes from Rousseau. In Chapter 8, Book 4, of *The Social Contract*, Rousseau outlines the tenets of civic religion: a belief in the existence of God, an afterlife, the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice, and the exclusion of religious intolerance (Bellah 1967).

James David Fairbanks (1981, 1982) and others (Isetti 1996, Calhoun 1993, Langston 1993, and Wimberly 1980) have written extensively on “civil religion” in the United States. Fairbanks defines civil religion as a “public perception of our national experience in light of universal and transcendent claims upon human beings, but especially upon Americans; a set of values, symbols and rituals institutionalized as the

cohesive force and center of meaning uniting our many people” (Fairbanks1981, 215). The American Pledge of Allegiance, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, national holidays such as Independence Day, President's Day, Memorial Day and other symbols characterize this “civil religion.”

In this celebration of civil religion, Washington is characterized as the divinely appointed Moses who led his people out of the hands of tyranny and Lincoln epitomizes the martyr who paid the ultimate sacrifice that saved the nation and provided a rebirth. This “civil religion” expresses a belief system that is separate from that involving a deity or deities and a belief in some sort of afterlife. It was not “religion in general” and was never intended by the Founders as a substitute for Christianity (Bellah 1967). While it is separate from most definitions of religion, the civil religion described by Bellah has been described as emphasizing the idea of America as God’s chosen people. This can be used to offer automatic justification for any course of action our leaders may undertake and risks elevating the national itself as an object of worship (Meacham 2006, 27). It is that manifest destiny that justifies or explains policies and actions.

Yet Bellah’s concept of civil religion and much of the scholarship that followed was interested in many factors such as the enumeration of republican virtues and specific references to documents or events associated with the idea of an American civil religion such as the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence or the Revolutionary War (Toolin 1983). While work on “civil religion” can be instructive, it is important to note my analysis is distinguished from these studies because it is intended to focus solely on rhetoric that can be characterized as “religious” in a more common understanding of that term. It is rhetoric that is tied specifically to a religious tradition, literature or practice.

This study is designed to be focused more narrowly on a specific rhetorical content than earlier work on “civil religion.”

While there are different definitions of ‘religion’ or ‘religious,’ for my purposes I will apply that of Merriam-Webster: religion is the service and worship of God or the supernatural; commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance; a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs and practices.¹³

Other scholars have explored the influence of more traditional religious sources on politics and political behavior. Stephen Carter (2000) and others (Corbett and Corbett 1999, Fowler, Hertzke, Olson and den Dulk 2004, Johnson and Tamney 1986, Wald 2003 and Lambert 2008) have written on the relationship between religion and politics. But these studies have primarily focused on the involvement of religious groups or organizations in politics. With the perception during the 1980s that conservative Christian groups were having a significant impact on politics and elections, there was significant scholarly study of such groups as the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition. The question of whether these groups had such influence and whether their political activities were appropriate has been well debated.

Carter, for example, believes religious groups make a mistake by attempting to influence elections. He believes once a religious organization wants a role in determining the outcome of election outcomes, it will do what it needs to do to enhance and preserve that role. If maintaining a pure religious doctrine would weaken its political/electoral influence, the doctrine is “unpurified” in order to enhance or maintain the group's influence (Carter 2000, 56). This line of literature doesn't look at the reverse question—will a president seeking political or electoral support using religious language or symbols

¹³ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/religion>, accessed May 11, 2009.

alter his political programs or doctrine to attempt to “purify” his political rhetoric and actions? Will he deliberately use religious symbols and metaphors to target and mobilize support for policies or election? While seeking the answer as to whether or not a president might alter policies or emphasize certain issues is a calculated move to bolster his religious credentials is beyond the scope of this project, the analysis of religious rhetoric is an attempt to answer some of these questions.

Because of the general nature of civil religion and the lack of specific appeals to a particular religion or denomination, the public generally accepts references to and observance of what has been characterized as civil religion as appropriate or, at the very least, unobjectionable. Thus Biblical symbolism using themes of Exodus (Zakai 1992; Miller, 1953), Americans as a chosen people and America as a New Jerusalem or Promised Land (Cherry 1971) have been common among many presidents (see, for example, Jefferson’s second inaugural address). Many presidents have gone further and invoked even more overtly religious language and symbols.

Few presidents employed Biblical symbols, religious language, and moral injunction in their public addresses more often than Franklin Roosevelt did. So effective and eloquent were these addresses that James MacGregor Burns concluded that “probably no American politician has given so many speeches that were essentially sermons rather than statements of policy” (Isetti 1996, 678). Roosevelt himself was not shy in characterizing himself in this way. After rejecting various labels people had used to describe him, FDR asserted flatly: “I am a Christian and a Democrat—that’s all” (Skowronek 1997, 297).

Christian sentiments reverberate throughout New Deal political rhetoric, a reminder of the pervasive influence the social gospel has played in American reform. But when Roosevelt began invoking these sentiments in the 1930s, he employed them to voice disapproval of the recent policies of his predecessor, to set his leadership apart from Hoover's and to tie his vision for America back to fundamentals. Christian sentiments painted unflattering images of the regime Roosevelt had displaced. In his first inaugural address Roosevelt spoke out against the "money changers" that were partially responsible for America's economic woes. He stated he would "apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit" and cleanse the temple of the stewards who had disgraced it. Roosevelt said we could now "restore that temple [of our civilization] to the ancient truths" (Roosevelt 1933). Change was possible, indeed imperative, he claimed, because the values that currently held sway in American government were not the values on which American civilization rested (Skowronek 1997, 299).

Similarly, public religiosity has seldom been more prevalent than it was in the 1950's when a president (Eisenhower) chose to begin his inaugural address with a prayer, when the phrase "under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance (1954), and when "In God We Trust" officially became the national motto (1956). Did this religious tenor impact the religious content of presidents?

What appears to differentiate some presidents, Reagan and Bush(43) for example, from other presidents is their use of Biblical and religious language not only to bolster the American spirit or to inspire us for difficulties or actions to come but for other personal and political reasons. While it may be difficult to ascertain a person's intentions from their use of specific rhetoric, I believe you can make a powerful argument based on the

content, timing and target group of their rhetoric. In addition, specific appeals to religious groups for support in political efforts became a standard component of the political agenda of Reagan and Bush(43). This alone distinguished their use of religion from other presidents

With an eye to Hart's (2002) characterization of forces that shape a president's rhetoric, one might argue that the frequent use of religion and religious metaphors by some presidents is merely an outward expression of a president's own religious beliefs. The more cynical (or realistic) might argue that the rhetoric was a calculated political exercise designed to gain political leverage with a more conservative, religious segment of the electorate.

In order to analyze the personal or biographical aspect of his rhetoric it may be important to examine the personal religious background or faith of a President. For example, George W. Bush was raised an Episcopalian but converted to Methodism after his marriage. He "recommitted" his life to Christ in the 1980s after concluding he was drinking too much. What is controversial in his particular use of religious rhetoric is the fact that he has gone beyond usual broad remarks on the power of faith in general to use language and ideas specific to Christianity. Rev. C. Weldon Gaddy, a Louisiana pastor and executive director of the Interfaith Alliance Foundation, notes that Bush uses terminology and vocabulary that "come straight out of a particular religious tradition, which is evangelical Christianity." Gaddy concludes that he thinks his (Bush's) "rhetoric implies a lack of appreciation for the vast pluralism of religion in this nation."¹⁴ Similar comments could also apply to Reagan's use of rhetoric and his appeals to groups such as

¹⁴ www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/02/18/bush.faith/index.html, accessed August 12, 2003.

the National Association of Religious Broadcasters and other conservative Christian groups.

Although troubling to some, this religious rhetoric is particularly welcomed by the evangelical Christian conservatives Bush was courting as he prepared to seek a second term. Bush's top political adviser, Karl Rove, concluded that as many as 4 million Christian conservatives who probably would have voted for Bush stayed home in the 2000 election. Rove declared in 2002 that “we have to spend a lot of time and energy” drawing them back into politics.¹⁵

Clearly, the Bush campaign’s intent was to bring those voters back to the polls and capture their votes for Bush. Indications of this strategy were clear from the very beginning of the Bush presidency. Rove met privately with Religious Right activists after the 2000 election but prior to the inaugural to reassure them that Bush would govern “as a philosophically driven president who is a conservative” and that he [Bush] would not hesitate “to promote his agenda, despite the closeness of the election.” Rove delivered the message that Bush needed the “full and faithful support” of religious conservatives if he was to be successful in enacting “his conservative agenda.” Bush had seen his father lose that support in 1992 (and his reelection bid) and was intent on reassuring these religious elements from the outset. It was clear that Rove and Bush understood the “first rule of American politics: never forget your political base” (Lambro 2001).

The religious right (alternatively referred to as the “Christian Right” or its members sometimes called “Christian conservatives”) continues to be, in spite of

¹⁵ Greene, David, "Bush Turns Increasingly to Language of Religion," *The Baltimore Sun*, www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0210-06.html, accessed August 12, 2003.

repeated predictions of its demise, a force in American politics. Various scholars have studied religious right interest groups (Watson 1997; Moen 1992, 1996), the electoral role of the religious right (Green, et al. 2000), the relationship between the movement and the Republican Party (Oldfield 1996), and the religious right as a social movement. In George W. Bush, the religious right might have had its most passionate presidential advocate.

Energizing this group, politically, appeared to be the expedient and effective way to enhance Bush's chances for re-election. While over 80% of the American population claims adherence to some form of Christian faith (Fowler et al. 2004, 29), conservative religious activists form an important part of the Republican electoral coalition. Almost from the day of its founding in 1989, the Christian Coalition was a force in the Republican Party (Carter 2000) and, even though their influence declined during the latter part of the 1990's, conservative Christians have remained an important segment of the Republican constituency. As Rove recognized, energizing this base vote would certainly enhance Bush's re-election chances. Not only were conservative Christians more likely to vote for Bush, religious people (defined by frequent church attendance) of all denominations are more likely to vote than their secular neighbors. (Guth, et al. 2001, 24). Within the categories of "Evangelical Protestant," "Mainline Protestant," and "White Catholic," recent analysis of those categorized as "traditionalist" voted at higher percentages in the 2004 presidential election than did the more centrist or modernist members of those respective groups. For Evangelical Protestants, the turnout rate for traditionalists was 66.8% (compared to 63.2% overall), in the category of Mainline Protestants, traditionalists voted at an 81.6% rate (69.2% overall) and traditionalist white

Catholics voted at 79.4% (compared to 67% overall). The only groups with similar turnout rates were Jewish voters (86.5%) (Guth, et al. 2006, 231).¹⁶

Some have argued that conservative Christian voting patterns have declined due to their suspicion of politicians and politics. However, social issues have served to mobilize them. *Roe v. Wade* and abortion, prayer in public schools, tax credits and vouchers for religious schools have been successfully utilized by Reagan and Bush(43) to solidify and mobilize conservative Christians. Ongoing debate on these issues and the infusion of issues related to same sex marriage can be an important force in any continuing effort to mobilize these groups in upcoming elections.

The apparent efforts by Bush to draw Christian conservatives back into politics and, more specifically, to support his candidacy included numerous public pronouncements by the President drawing on general references to God and faith as well as specific instances of Biblical and Christian references. This effort appears to be part of an organized strategy but a religious strategy was not limited to the Bush campaign. In the 2004 presidential campaign both candidates had a “religious strategy,” but Bush’s was well developed and consistent while Kerry’s was characterized as “reactive and erratic” (Guth et al. 2006, 224). Kerry never appeared to be comfortable with discussing his personal religious beliefs.

Bush and Rove pursued a far-reaching approach to connecting with and mobilizing those they perceived to be more receptive to a campaign tied to religion—

¹⁶ As defined in the Guth et al. 2006 analysis, “traditionalists” adhere to orthodox beliefs, participate frequently in normative religious behaviors, and want their religious institutions to adhere to traditional beliefs and practices. Modernists reject orthodox beliefs and embrace new religious ideas, participate less frequently in normative religious behaviors, and hope their religious communities will adopt beliefs and practices consistent with modern ideas. Centrists, hold moderate orthodox beliefs, are somewhat active religiously, but tend not to identify with religious movements on either side.

those defined as religious traditionalists. Especially important in this effort were the Evangelical Protestants and conservative Catholics. Bush presented himself as a part of the conservative religious community, using religious rhetoric and themes to an extent arguably unparalleled for any modern president (Guth et al. 2006, 224).

Throughout his first campaign and continuing through his presidency, Bush utilized the rhetoric of religion. In his 2003 State of the Union address, Bush said “The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God’s gift to humanity.” He went on to state that “We Americans have faith in ourselves, but not in ourselves alone. We do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life and all of history. May He guide us now, and may God continue to bless the United States of America” (Bush 2003).

While much of his rhetoric was specific and required little interpretation, there were also examples of a more subtle use of religious rhetoric. Again, in his 2003 State of the Union address, Bush stated: “There is *power—wonder-working power*—in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people.” While this specific rhetorical reference may not have registered with many Americans, it was immediately recognized by most conservative Christians as a phrase from the chorus of a popular Christian hymn, “There Is Power in the Blood” which states: “There is *power, power, wonder-working power* in the precious blood of the lamb.”¹⁷ This connection between Bush’s rhetoric and the hymn was prominently featured on the Christian Broadcasting Network, which has an audience demographic critical to Bush’s re-election. Use of this phrase is an example of the attempt to connect with conservative Christians in a subtle way that would not be offensive to the more secular segments of society. Followers may hear and comprehend

¹⁷ *There is Power in the Blood*, words and music by Lewis E. Jones.

a leader's message, but if that message does not resonate at some deeper, emotional level, then followers will be less willing to act on it (Emrich, et al. 2001, 532). As presidential speechwriter Mark Gerson has stated, they [the Bush White House] don't speak in code but they do use language that resonates with certain segments of the population (Gerson 2004). Clearly that language (religious rhetoric) was designed to resonate with the conservative, Christian base Rove had targeted.

2004

While post-election analysis can sometimes "oversimplify" the issues influencing how people vote, there is little dispute that religion played an important role in the 2004 presidential election (Guth, et al., 2006). One analysis posited that Bush "showed himself willing to use religion forcefully to sharpen partisan divisions and highlight his own qualities as a leader," while John Kerry and the Democrats "faced obstacles in using religious rhetoric, in appealing to religion to underscore his qualities as a leader, and in benefiting from the political organization of religious groups." Religion, this analysis concluded, "was at the heart of the [2004] campaign." (Muirhead et al, 2005, 222 quoted in Guth et al. 2006, 224).

According to a post-election survey conducted by the University of Akron, nearly 95% of traditional Evangelical voters, 93.5% of traditional Mainline voters and 94.3% of traditional white Catholics believed that America needed a president with strong religious beliefs. On the question of whether faith was important to their voting decision those percentages were 83.1, 68.3 and 77.9. Analysis of this data showed a clear pattern: groups that voted for Bush also approved of a strong role for religion in the process and report that it played a vital role in their decision (Guth et al. 2006, 233).

2006 and beyond

One interesting development during the 2006 election campaign season was increasing use of religious language and expression of religious beliefs not only by Republican candidates but by Democratic candidates as well. It continued the religious rhetoric of recent campaigns and served as a harbinger for the upcoming presidential race in 2008. For example, Barack Obama spoke openly about “the political divide in this country” that “has fallen sharply along religious lines.”¹⁸ Speaking to the Call to Renewal Conference, Obama went on to note that “the single biggest gap in party affiliation among white Americans today is not between men and women, or those who reside in so-called red states and those who reside in blue, but between those who attend church regularly and those who don’t.”¹⁹ Obama asserted Democrats were making “a mistake when we fail to acknowledge the power of faith in the lives of the American people, and join a serious debate about how to reconcile faith with our modern, pluralistic democracy.”²⁰ Obama’s efforts for progressives to shed their bias against religious people and recognize “overlapping values” were further demonstrated as Obama accepted an invitation to speak “where few progressive Democrats usually venture—to a large, conservative evangelical church that boasts a Sunday attendance of more than 20,000 people.” He appeared at Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, on World AIDS Day, December 1, 2006.²¹

Other Democratic candidates have also discussed their faith openly and the role of faith in politics. During his successful campaign to unseat conservative Pennsylvania

¹⁸ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/juneweb-only/126-41.0.html#related>, accessed December 1, 2006.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Chicago Tribune*, November 15, 2006.

Senator Rick Santorum, Democrat Bob Casey spoke openly of his Catholic faith and his religious work with the Jesuit Corps. John Kerry, 2004 Democratic nominee for president, delivered a speech in California where he talked of “Godly tasks” and described his own journey of faith. During his campaign for the U.S. Senate, Harold Ford Jr., ran an ad showing him seated in a church telling voters, “I started in a church the old-fashioned way. I was forced to and I’m better for it.” These efforts have been characterized as a new willingness by Democrats to discuss religion in personal terms.²² This is true even though candidates such as Hillary Clinton have attempted to walk a “delicate tight rope” as they talk openly on faith and religion without “speaking directly about the controversial social issues”²³ that are often associated with religious components. In addition to candidates themselves using religious rhetoric to reach out to the public, Democrats chose well-known evangelical Christian Jim Wallis to deliver their weekly Saturday radio address on December 2, 2006.

Scholars have noted a general tendency for Democrats to use less religious rhetoric than Republicans. This may help explain why Democrats have had difficulty appealing to the so-called values voters (Coe and Domke 2006, Domke 2004). As noted Barack Obama exhibited less reluctance to utilize religious rhetoric. The examples of religious rhetoric cited above and more open discussion by Democratic candidates on issues of faith and religion may be an indication of strategy for presidential politics beyond 2008. It may indicate willingness for candidates from both parties to utilize religious rhetoric to enhance their electoral success and address issues.

²² www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14926254, accessed December 1, 2006

²³ www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/06/29/mg.thy/index.html, accessed December 1, 2006.

These and many other examples provide a theoretical rationale to analyze the rhetoric of presidents. As mentioned, it is difficult to impute motivations or intentions to people, even Presidents, through their actions alone. A careful analysis of the content of their rhetoric as well as the timing and target audience can be helpful in that regard. There is a surprising lack of literature on what appears to be an overt, political attempt to inject religion (specifically Christianity) into presidential rhetoric and action.

The Culture War Aspect

Perhaps one area that will help analyze the changing rhetoric of presidents can be found in the ongoing debate about whether America is in the midst of a “culture war.”

There is not a consensus on the nature of changing American beliefs and values in the United States, or even a consensus on whether a change has occurred. There is agreement among political scientists that religion is an important element of contemporary American politics (Fowler et al. 2004; Green et al. 1993, 1995, 2000; Layman 2001; Wilcox 1996). The study of the interaction of religion and politics has spawned a variety of approaches and perspectives, but the “culture war” framework is one of the most persistent and influential (Hunter 1991, 1994) but certainly a framework that has its critics (Fiorina 2005). The cleavage created is one of traditional and progressive moral views. Hunter attempts to describe social change as a conflict between competing moral beliefs in the public realm (Stout 2001). In the present culture war, religion often defines those competing beliefs.

The battle lines in this culture war are drawn between two groups. One group Hunter terms “orthodox” and is made up of religious conservatives. This group’s moral vision is based on a “consistent, unchangeable measure of value, purpose, goodness, and

identity” (Hunter 1991, 44). The orthodox holds traditional, conservative beliefs about social issues in the United States. The other group, made up of those who are religious liberals and the secular, is termed “progressive.” Progressives’ moral vision is “defined by the spirit of the modern age, a spirit of rationalism and subjectivism” (44). Hunter defines the cultural conflict as stemming from these different moral visions and these groups’ struggle “to define the meaning of America” (51). Hunter also observed that the culture war is being played out at the elite rather than mass level. The term “culture war” has entered the American lexicon in the past decade and is frequently used by politicians and pundits to describe the state of American politics.

There is evidence that the culture war has influenced the rhetoric that presidents use. Hunter describes a culture war being fought by elites in American society over the moral direction of the country (Hunter 1991, 1994). While he terms this a war between the orthodox and the progressive, the war is essentially between social conservatives and social liberals. The focus of this study is not to analyze or search for evidence of a culture war. It does however look for underlying political motivation by presidents to use language that could appeal to certain segments of the electorate. As social issues reach a more prominent role in political discussion or electoral behavior, rhetoric can be examined to determine if it appeals (or is intended to appeal) to those segments where those issues are salient.

Case Studies

Finally, this examination of religious rhetoric will employ qualitative methods to analyze certain presidents and their use of religious rhetoric. The purpose of this limited

case study approach will be to focus more closely on individual presidents, their particular religious background, personal beliefs and to explore their particular use of religious rhetoric. Presidential biographies and other source material will be used to contextualize their rhetoric and to examine the religious philosophy of individual presidents. In highlighting these individual presidents we may be able to determine if the religious rhetoric utilized by presidents reflects their own religious beliefs. If their rhetoric does not match their personal beliefs it could be argued that the rhetoric was employed for a more strategic reason.

All of this suggests the value of analyzing president's use of religious rhetoric. While other scholars have examined presidential rhetoric for inclusion of the language of "freedom" (Coe 2007) or moral rhetoric (Shogan 2006), this is the first comprehensive examination of religious rhetoric for all presidents of which I am aware.

Summary of Findings

Inaugural Addresses

In Chapter II I will analyze the Inaugural Addresses given by all presidents. Like many other presidential actions, George Washington established the precedent for his successors to deliver an address at the time of their formal inauguration as president. Since Washington's first in 1789 there have been a total of 56 inaugural addresses delivered by 38 presidents (including Obama's 2009 Inaugural). Since several vice-presidents ascended to the office of the presidency due to the president's death during his term, a total of five presidents did not deliver a formal inaugural address. These were Tyler, Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, Arthur and Ford.

In these 56 inaugural addresses there were a total of 129,562 words or an average of 2356. The length of the addresses have ranged from Washington's scant 135 word address at his second inaugural to William Henry Harrison's 8444 word address that lasted nearly two hours. Harrison's Inaugural Address would be remembered for more than its length. Speaking in the wet and cold without an overcoat, Harrison would develop a cold that turned into pneumonia. He became the first president to die in office after serving only thirty-two days.²⁴

Despite their historical disparity in length, inaugural addresses delivered by modern presidents tend to be very similar in length. Since Truman became the first president to have an inaugural address televised there have been a total of 16 televised inaugurations. These televised addresses have averaged 1941 words and range from a low of Carter's 1228 words (1977) to Reagan's second address that was 2562 words long (1985). In addition, the lengthiest addresses are contained in some of the earliest inaugurals. These included W. Harrison's (8444), Monroe's second (4461), Polk (4800) and Taft (5428). As demonstrated in Chart 1 [Inaugural Address—Word Length] the overall trend in length has been for shorter addresses.

[INSERT CHART I HERE]

Regarding the use of religious rhetoric, the historical analysis shows a rather significant trend for presidents to use more religious rhetoric in inaugural addresses. Despite the fact there has been a tendency for presidents to use less religious rhetoric of a general nature or religious rhetoric tied to a policy proposal or issue, the overall use of religious rhetoric has increased. This is due to a rather significant increase in the use of

²⁴ <http://www.millercenter.virginia.edu/index.php/Ampres/essays/harrison/biography/6>, accessed August 30, 2007.

specific religious rhetoric. For the 56 inaugural addresses analyzed there were a total of 263 examples of religious rhetoric. Pursuant to the coding rules, these were classified as specific (118 or an average of 2.1), policy-related (25 or an average of .5) or general (120 or an average of 2.0).

State of the Union

Beginning with Washington's first message to Congress to fulfill the Constitution prescription for the President to "from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to the Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient" (Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution) there have a total of 220 messages or addresses. While Washington established many precedents for his successors the oral delivery of the annual message was not one of them. For while Washington and John Adams delivered their annual messages in person to Congress Thomas Jefferson believed the appearance was "too royal" and chose instead to submit the message to Congress in written form. This would be the method utilized until 1913. Woodrow Wilson decided to deliver his 1913 message in person. With only a few exceptions subsequent presidents have also made the trip to Capitol Hill to deliver what we now refer to as the State of the Union address.

In these 222 State of the Union messages there are a total of 1,784,586 words (an average of 8038 words per address). It should probably be no surprise that addresses delivered in person to Congress tended to be significantly shorter. One hundred thirty written messages averaged 10,498 words while those 92 addresses before a joint session of Congress averaged only 4625.

A total of 584 examples of religious rhetoric were identified in State of the Union messages. Using the coding rules for this analysis, these were categorized as either specific (200), policy related (120) or general (264).

Regarding the five hypotheses posited in this research, the analysis supports the following conclusions:

- 1. Use of religious rhetoric in Inaugural Addresses and State of the Union messages has increased.**
- 2. Presidents employ religious rhetoric that is increasingly more specific and Christian in content.**
- 3. Republican presidents use religious rhetoric more than Democrats.**
- 4. Religious rhetoric will decrease during a president's second term.**
- 5. Religious rhetoric will increase during a time of war although not significantly.**

In the following chapters I will examine and substantiate each of these conclusion

Chapter II

The Inaugural Address

*Revive us again;
Fill each heart with thy love,
May each soul be rekindled
with fire from above.*²⁵

Introduction

Perhaps no other presidential speech has the same dramatic effect as the inaugural address. Those who have written about and described the ‘civil religion’ of American politics often refer to the inaugural address as the quintessential expression of this value. The inaugural ceremony is an important component of the national exercise Americans have grown to cherish—the orderly and peaceful transfer of power from one individual to another, the optimism of a new administration and, many times, the ideas and principles of a different political party. It is a new beginning that consecrates a new leader (Toolin 1983).

Inauguration Day, although a political day, has been described as having significant religious overtones (Bellah 1967). For the President, sometimes considered the ‘high priest’ of the American civil religion, it serves as his investiture and reminds us of those documents that are considered the sacred texts of this civil religion (Constitution, Declaration of Independence, etc.). It is an opportunity for the new president and his fellow citizens to reflect on founding principles. In the words of Roderick Hart: “[W]hen an American president is inaugurated, he is also ordained” (Hart 1977, 9). But while earlier scholars have referenced this “ordination” in relation to a broader civil religion,

²⁵ *Revive Us Again*, Words by William P. Mackay (1863); Music by John J. Husband (c. 1815).

the rhetoric of the inaugural addresses might also represent a more overtly religious intent and effect.

Historically, presidents have used the inaugural address to educate, to report, to motivate and to prepare Americans for circumstances and hardships facing the nation. Although they are sometimes dismissed because of their predictable content or their extremely formal style, presidential inaugural addresses can provide an important perspective on American political history. Presidents articulate their visions for the nation in inaugural addresses (Emrich et al. 2001, 549). By analyzing variations in content throughout history, inaugural addresses can contribute to our overall understanding of presidential values and intentions through their use of rhetoric, including religious rhetoric.

Inaugural addresses have been described by scholars as reflective, to a significant degree, of American political culture across time (Korzi 2004, 21). Inaugural addresses can be helpful in tracking a president's changing conceptions of his role as well as his interpretation of the contemporary political culture. Korzi, for example, places inaugural addresses into three distinct (although overlapping) periods. Inaugural addresses delivered in these three periods (defined as the early, constitutional period—before the 1830s; the party period—1830s-1890s; and the plebiscitary period—roughly 1900s on) each reflected a different understanding on the part of the president of the relationship between the people and the president (Korzi 2004, 22).

During the early stages of our democracy, presidents may have felt the need to use the occasion of their inauguration to remind citizens of the foundations of our republic and the proper role of government, especially the federal government. As

detailed by Korzi, inaugural addresses in the nineteenth century were primarily used by new presidents to instruct the people in republican doctrine or to educate the people as to the meaning of American constitutional government. Nearly all nineteenth-century presidents mention and discuss the Constitution, while few twentieth-century presidents do so (Korzi 2004, 23). Perhaps the stability and ongoing maturity of the country and its citizens lessened the need, in the eyes of the president, to play the role of Constitutional educator.

Some scholars have analyzed inaugural addresses and noted consistent themes contained in the addresses. David Ericson, for example, has argued that there are “eleven inaugural themes” which are contained in nearly all of the inaugural addresses. His study identified those themes as: (1) civic virtue; (2) nonpartisanship; (3) national unity; (4) general policy principles; (5) cooperation with Congress; (6) popular support; (7) a providential supreme being; (8) the American mission; (9) political continuity; (10) the president's role as defender of the Constitution and union; and (11) federalism (Ericson 1997, 728).

Ericson expands on his theme regarding a “providential supreme being” by stating that such use in an inaugural address could be seen as merely demonstrating that “different presidents have meant different things by invoking such a being.” Ericson states, however, that use of this rhetoric shares a common significance. The use of such language allows the president to identify with the populous by “acknowledging their common humanity” and that he shares the limitations of human nature with his fellow citizens. He is, after all, only human. Ericson asserts that this language allows the new president to confess that the office of the presidency is too great for a human to fulfill

adequately without some assistance from a higher power (Ericson 1997, 727).

Washington displayed such sentiment in his first inaugural address. Noting that he was very content in his retirement from public service, Washington stated that “the magnitude and difficulty of the trust to which the voice of my country called me,” was “sufficient to awaken in the wisest and most experienced of her citizens a distrustful scrutiny into his qualifications.” This scrutiny “could not but overwhelm with despondence one who...ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies.” His “deficiencies” would certainly mean that mistakes might be made but he hoped the American people would understand the good intentions of his actions. Washington then noted that it would be “improper to omit in this first official act” his “fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe...and whose providential aids can supply every human defect” (Washington 1789).

Campbell and Jamieson have shown the similarity across time of the content of inaugural addresses delivered by presidents who had been re-elected to a second term (1986). Others have used inaugural addresses to illustrate the changes in the American political system (Chester 1980; Hinckley 1990; Ryan 1993; Tulis 1987).

Historical Examples

When Washington observed that “I walk on untrodden ground,” he clearly recognized that as the first American president his actions would influence his successors and shape future administrations (Ellis 2004, 189). Like many other precedents established by our first president, Washington established the tradition of delivering oral remarks at the time of his inauguration. Although brief (1428 words), these comments were certainly not delivered without considerable preparation. While there was a general

consensus that Washington would assume the office of the presidency upon ratification of the new Constitution, Washington did so reluctantly (Abbot 1987, 152).

When it became apparent that he would become the new nation's first chief executive, Washington began to prepare what he considered appropriate remarks for the occasion. As early as January, 1789, he began the process of drafting the comments to Congress that would serve as the first inaugural address. He requested David Humphreys to draft remarks for him that could be delivered to Congress in the event of his election to the presidency (Abbot 1987, 152). In choosing Humphreys for this task Washington was selecting a long-time aide with experience as a writer and advisor.

The son of a minister, Humphreys was a colonel in the Revolutionary army who became a trusted aide de camp to Washington. A graduate of Yale and a poet, Humphreys volunteered for military service in 1776 and moved quickly up the military hierarchy. In 1780, after sending Washington a copy of a poem in which he praised Washington and his "godlike presence," Humphreys was transferred to Washington's command (Cifelli 1982, 25). Humphreys soon gained Washington's trust and friendship and their relationship would continue long after the war (Zagarri 1991, xvii).

It was Humphreys who was chosen by Washington to deliver the surrendered British colors to Congress after Cornwallis had been defeated at Yorktown and he was one of two aides to accompany Washington into the House chamber during the ceremony when Washington surrendered his commission as Commander of the Continental Army. After the ceremony, Humphreys accompanied Washington and Mrs. Washington back to Mount Vernon. Humphreys would later return to military service as commander of the Connecticut contingent raised to combat Shays' rebellion in 1786 (Abbot 1997, 104).

Humphreys and Washington frequently corresponded when Humphrey was absent from Mount Vernon. In the period leading up to the Constitutional Convention, Humphreys advised Washington not to attend the Convention because "...the probability . . . that nothing general or effectual would be done . . . amounts now almost to a certainty" (Letter from Humphreys to Washington dated March 24, 1787; Abbot 1997, 102). This advice was given despite the fact Humphreys believed that if Washington did attend he would "...indisputably be elected president" (Letter from Humphreys to Washington dated April 9, 1787; Abbot 1987, 132).

Following the death of his parents in 1787, Humphreys took advantage of a standing invitation from Washington and moved to Mount Vernon, staying there until Washington left to assume the presidency in 1789 (Zagarri 1991, xx).

Fulfilling Washington's request for assistance in drafting an address, Humphreys apparently produced a lengthy document for Washington's use. On January 2, 1789, Washington wrote to James Madison that he wanted to send him "a private & confidential letter" for his consideration. Madison's notations on the January 2nd letter indicate that the proposed "confidential" letter dealt with Washington's inaugural address. Washington's original letter is now missing but it is described in later correspondence between Madison and Jared Sparks, the nineteenth-century editor of Washington's writings (Abbot 1987, 152).

As Sparks was collecting manuscripts for his collection of Washington's papers in the late 1820s, he came across the January letter to Madison among Washington's papers at Mount Vernon. Already in touch with Madison concerning Madison's correspondence with Washington, Sparks wrote to him on May 22, 1827: "The letter dated Jany 1789,

related to the Message to the first congress, and there is preserved with it the copy of a message, or as he calls it, a speech, in his own hand, which I presume is the same that was sent to you for your revision, according to the request in his letter. The person to whom he alludes as the author of it, and whom he designates as a 'gentleman under this roof,' I suppose to be Colonel Humphreys."

Sparks continued: "The speech, as copied by Washington, was some seventy-three pages in length. It included a short space for a prayer that was to be introduced after the first paragraph. It is certainly an extraordinary production for a message to Congress, and it is happy, that Washington took counsel of his own understanding, and of his other friends, before he made use of this document. No part of it seems to have been formally introduced in the real message." (Letter from Jared Sparks to James Madison dated May 22, 1827).²⁶ Sparks noted to Madison his intent not to include the draft among Washington's papers since he said he could not conceive that the "public would deprive benefit from them."²⁷

Madison replied to Sparks on May 30th and indicated that he concurred "without hesitation, in your remarks on the speech of 73 pages, and in the expediency of not including it among the papers selected for the press. Nothing but an extreme delicacy towards the author of the Draft, who no doubt, was Col. Humphreys, can account for the respect shown to so strange a production."²⁸

Sparks would again write Madison regarding the original speech and questioned whether Madison could provide further insight regarding Washington's request for

²⁶ Library of Congress, The James Madison Papers, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/madison_papers/, accessed September 6, 2007.

²⁷ *Ibid*

²⁸ *Ibid*

Madison to review the original draft: “The letter to you of Jany, 1789, is the first draft, not recorded in the books, and is in some respects curious. It is in the highest degree confidential, and is not such a letter as I should think of printing, yet it gives me a clue to some important facts, that will be useful to me.” (Letter from Jared Sparks to James Madison dated August 25, 1827)²⁹ Madison had retained the original January 2nd letter from Washington and had made a notation at the bottom that “the letter being peculiarly confidential was returned or rather left with its enclosure, at Mt Vernon on my way to N. York. The return tho not asked nor probably expected, was suggested by a motive of delicacy.” In addition, Madison noted that he did not retain copies of his comments to Washington on the draft (Abbot 1987, 153).

In addition to Madison it is highly likely that Washington sought the advice of others regarding his anticipated remarks. Whether it was due to comments from Madison or others or simply based on his own opinion as to the appropriate remarks for such an occasion, Washington chose to deliver a much shorter, less specific address than Humphreys’ initial draft. There is no way to tell what impact this lengthy, detailed address might have had either on his audience or on the precedent for future presidents in framing their inaugural remarks had Washington chose to deliver it.

Sparks was correct in his belief that little or nothing of the Humphreys’ draft was ultimately used in Washington’s inaugural address to Congress. As a result, perhaps, Sparks concluded there was little merit in retaining the draft among the Washington papers to be published. Washington’s handwritten copy of the address would not survive intact. Inundated by requests for some memento of Washington, Sparks cut the copy in Washington’s handwriting into bits and pieces of varying size and distributed them to

²⁹ *Ibid*

those seeking a fragment of Washington's writing. The surviving fragments are frequently accompanied by a notation by Sparks that they are genuine examples of Washington's writing (Abbot 1987, 153). Since the only surviving copy of the draft is the document sent to Madison with Washington's January letter, there is no way to ascertain how closely the version copied by Washington and subsequently divided and distributed corresponds to the Humphreys draft or to what extent Washington may have altered or amended it in his copy. Some of these fragments have been recovered and attempts made to reassemble them. However, many of the fragments are too small to ascertain a logical placement and many of the fragments have not been recovered (Abbot 1987, 158-173).

Washington often requested Madison's assistance in drafting other messages to Congress and he may well have asked his aid in formulating the inaugural address that was ultimately delivered. At least one scholar asserts that Madison visited Mount Vernon on his way to New York for the opening of the new Congress and that Madison, Washington and Humphreys discarded the draft and Madison wrote the short speech that was ultimately delivered (Ketcham 1990, 278). Washington also may have requested a new draft from David Humphreys or made his own alterations. Only Washington's draft of the address in the version actually delivered to both houses of Congress on Inauguration Day has survived.

The Humphreys draft is significant if for no other reason than to show Washington's opinion as to the style and content of remarks appropriate for the inauguration of a president. The language of the address Washington would deliver compared with the draft might also give us some insight into the religious views of

Washington and what he considered the appropriate use of religious rhetoric in official communication

The Humphreys draft was considerably longer than the actual address and contained remarks that we might now consider more appropriate for an Annual Message. The draft mentions the Constitutional amendment process, the organization of the judicial department, taxes and tariffs, restoring the national credit, defense issues, public transportation, trade policy and currency matters.³⁰

The draft also includes references of religious rhetoric that are considerably different than those ultimately utilized by Washington. Some of the religious references contained in the Humphreys draft are similar to the rhetoric of the actual inaugural address. The draft refers to the “Parent of all good” and the “searcher of hearts.” Washington’s address would refer to the “Almighty Being,” the “Great Author of every public good,” the “Invisible Hand,” and the “Parent of the Human Race.” Both the draft and the address would make numerous references to “Heaven.” The draft refers to a belief that, during the conflict with Great Britain, the colonists had “a confident trust that we should not be forsaken by Heaven” and referred to “an humble approbation in Heaven” and “the blessings of Heaven.” The address delivered refers to the “propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained” (1789).

The draft does contain, however, examples of more specific religious rhetoric that is often closely associated with Christianity that do not appear in the delivered address.

⁶ The fragments of the Humphreys draft are printed in Abbot, W.W., ed., *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series*, vol. 2, April - June 1789. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987), 152-58; and retrieved from <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/inaugural/fragments.html>, accessed June 10, 2008.

The draft not only refers to “Divine Providence,” “Divine Munificence” and the fact that the members of Congress could find their acts “acceptable in the sight of the Divinity” but it also refers to “God” in three different sections. Americans had suffered during the Revolutionary War, the draft said, but their efforts would soon make their country “as fair as the garden of God” and would be filled with “praises of the Most High.” Those entrusted with the new government must be ever vigilant to prevent “folly or perverseness in short-sighted mortals,” the draft stated. “The blessed Religion revealed in the word of God will remain an eternal and awful monument to prove that the best Institutions may be abused by human depravity.” The fragments of the draft conclude with an earnest supplication to “Almighty God, to whose holy keeping I commend my dearest Country.” Washington’s address would not mention the word “God.” As noted in the following section, the word “God” would not appear in an inaugural address until James Monroe in 1821. After Monroe it would not reappear in an inaugural address until Franklin Pierce in 1853. Had Washington included this language with specific references to God as contained in the draft the religious rhetoric contained in early inaugural addresses might have been considerably different.

The First Inaugural

According to historical accounts, crowds began to gather in front of the presidential residence early on the morning of April 30th, the day designated for Washington’s inaugural (Abbot 1987, 154; Library of Congress³¹). At twelve o’clock the troops of the city paraded before the presidential mansion. Next in the procession came the committees of Congress and various executive department heads in their

³¹ <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trt051.html>, accessed September 6, 2007.

carriages to escort the President to the ceremony. At approximately 12:30 p.m. the procession moved toward the designated location—Federal Hall. Washington was escorted into the Hall and Senate-chamber, where he was met by John Adams, the Vice-President, and members of the Senate and House of Representatives. Shortly thereafter, Washington made his way to the balcony outside the Hall overlooking Wall Street for the administration of the oath of office. The oath was administered in public by Robert Livingston, Chancellor of New York, around one o'clock in the afternoon.

As the first president Washington would establish many precedents that subsequent executives would follow including the language of the oath itself. Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution provides the following:

Before he enter on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation—"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."³²

At the conclusion of the oath Washington added the affirmation "So help me God" and kissed the Bible which had been used in the ceremony. Although not included in the language of the Constitutional oath, these four words have been repeated by every president since Washington and it is now a standard phrase the Chief Justice (or other official) includes when administering the oath.

Unlike the public appearance and address we have grown accustomed to seeing every four years, Washington did not deliver remarks to the assembled crowd. Once the oath had been administered, Washington and the official party returned to the Senate chamber where Washington delivered his inaugural address. As noted on Washington's

³² All presidents except Franklin Pierce have "sworn" the oath. Pierce, an Episcopalian, chose to "solemnly affirm" the oath due to religious reasons.

copy of the address, it is directed to “Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives” and not to a wider audience.

Following the address the president and the members of the House and Senate walked to St. Paul’s Chapel to attend services conducted by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Provoost, Bishop of the Episcopal church of New York and rector of Trinity Church (Humphreys 1917, 447). That evening Washington, accompanied by Humphreys, viewed fireworks celebrating his inauguration (Abbot 1987, 155).

Regarding the content of his address, Washington set the example for future presidents in his first inaugural. He sought to “praise virtuous men, to display his own character and virtue, and to implore fellow officers of the government to take their guidance from the Constitution and from ‘that Almighty Being who rules over the Universe’” (Tulis 1987, 47-48). As noted in the previous section, Washington’s first inaugural would contain seven examples of what I have coded as general religious rhetoric.³³ These would include “my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe...that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States” and “homage to the Great Author of every public and private good.” No group of people could fail “to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than those of the United States” because “every step” of our history “seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.”

³³ **General:** references to “Providence,” “a higher power” or other similar language without a specific reference to a particular religious foundation or source (Bible, scripture, hymn, etc.). See Coding Rules in Appendix A.

Washington would praise the “talents, the rectitude, and the patriotism” of the members of Congress “since there is no truth more thoroughly established than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness; between duty and advantage; between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity.” He would add: “...the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained.”

Washington would conclude his address with “...I shall take my present leave; but not without resorting once more to the benign Parent of the Human Race in humble supplication that, since He has been pleased to favor the American people with opportunities...so His divine blessing may be equally conspicuous in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations, and the wise measures on which the success of this Government must depend” (Washington 1789).

Most scholars do not dispute the assertion that the colonies were full of religious people and most of them were Christian. Washington himself often laced his military orders with references to the Almighty, but usually in the same vein as we see in Jefferson’s use of “Nature’s God” or the “Creator” in the Declaration of Independence. Washington’s use of the word “Christian” and his reliance on chaplains during the Revolutionary War was probably due more to “cultural reality” than to his own personal beliefs. Bishop William White, an acquaintance of Washington’s in Philadelphia and in New York, said, “I do not believe that any degree of recollection will bring to my mind and fact which would prove General Washington to have been a believer in the Christian revelation...” (Meacham 2007, 78).

However, Washington was certainly aware that the people who looked to him for leadership, his soldiers and the colonists who had placed their trust in him to lead them to victory, were largely Christian. Even though Washington would not use specific Christian references or Biblical passages like some of his successors, he spoke to them in the language and symbolism that they understood. This might explain why Washington would use rhetoric that indicates a divine intervention in the birth of the new country.

Many scholars have posited that Washington was a Deist. A tenet of Deism is that a Deity created the universe but that the Deity does not perform “miracles” which defy the laws of physics, or intervene in a supernatural way in the affairs of mankind.³⁴ A Deist does not see Providential intrusions in human affairs.

Not all scholars agree that Washington was a Deist. Michael and Jana Novak, for example, conclude that Washington was a “serious Christian” and that what he said in public about religion was the same as what he said in private (Novak 2006).

The next five presidents, with one exception, would follow Washington’s example regarding the basic content of their inaugural remarks. Jefferson, perhaps due to the rising influence of partisanship, does not merely articulate his own understanding of republican principles; he also articulates his party’s understanding of republican doctrine. The inaugurals of Madison and Monroe revert to the style of Washington and Adams.

John Adams to Madison

Adams, having served eight years as Washington’s vice-president, was elected as our second president. Baptized in the Puritan Church, Adams was a devout Christian and married the daughter of a Congregational minister. Protestant Christianity dominated the society of Braintree, Massachusetts where John Adams grew up. As characterized by one

³⁴ <http://www.deism.com>, accessed July 17, 2008.

scholar, religion “dominated the town’s life, shaped it, directed it, made it . . . an important arena in the universal drama of salvation. To spend one’s boyhood in such a community meant to bear its imprint for life on the conscious and subconscious levels of one’s existence” (Smith 1962, 5).

Toward the end of his inaugural address, Adams embarks on a lengthy pronouncement explaining matters that will guide him as president. He first notes the voluntary retirement of George Washington, the service Washington rendered to the nation and the richly deserved respect that Washington’s service had produced both at home and abroad. Adams notes that “both Houses of Congress . . . the legislatures and the people throughout the nation” have recommended that future presidents should imitate the actions of Washington. He proceeds to list a number of factors that will serve as his guide as President. In this lengthy paragraph (727 words—nearly one-third of the inaugural address), Adams states “a preference . . . of a free republican government . . . an attachment to the Constitution of the United States . . . an equal and impartial regard to the rights, interest, honor, and happiness of all the States in the Union . . . [and] a love of virtuous men of all parties and denominations” are among these guiding factors. He concludes by saying “if a veneration for the religion of a people who profess and call themselves Christians, and a fixed resolution to consider a decent respect for Christianity among the best recommendations for the public service, can enable me in any degree to comply with your wishes” that it will be his “strenuous endeavor that this sagacious injunction of the two Houses shall not be without effect” (Adams 1797).

So Adams asserts that not only is America a Christian nation comprised of “people who profess and call themselves Christian” but that a “decent respect for Christianity” is one of the best recommendations for public service.

John Adams believed the character of a man as engendered by the Christian religion was important for public service and the well being of the nation. In various official activities before becoming president he acknowledged these attributes and encouraged attendance of soldiers during the War at religious services. One of Adams’ duties during the Revolutionary War was as chairman of the Board of War. In this capacity Adams proposed an addition to the articles governing the conduct of the troops that “earnestly recommended to all officers and soldiers diligently to attend divine service” (Smith 1962, 306).

While Adams was a professing and practicing Christian, the religious beliefs of his successor are cloudier. Thomas Jefferson was a leading proponent of religious freedom and religious toleration who refused, as president, to proclaim days of thanksgiving and prayer. Jefferson’s personal religious beliefs have been subjected to numerous examinations. Jefferson has been described by one scholar as “the most self-consciously theological of all America’s presidents” (Gaustad 1996, xiii). Gaustad goes on to assert that Jefferson’s political opponents who labeled him an atheist “could not have been further off the mark” (Gaustad 1996, 38).

In his two inaugurals Jefferson would, primarily, follow the custom of Washington and Adams in his use of religious rhetoric and use religious rhetoric in a general way. With the exception of Adams’ one very specific reference to Christianity in his inaugural address, Washington and Adams used a total of eleven general religious

references in their inaugural addresses. In his first inaugural, Jefferson would make reference to the banishment of “religious intolerance” in America and that Americans were “enlightened by a benign religion.” He would also make reference to that “Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe” and in his second to “that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land...” (Jefferson 1805).

Jefferson’s protégé and successor, James Madison, would set a new standard for minimal usage of religious rhetoric among the early presidents. This lack of religious rhetoric is especially notable since Madison had been educated in a religious tradition common in this era. Education in Madison’s day was founded on the study of classic Greek and Roman texts. The other “foundation stone” was the Christian tradition. From his earliest education through graduation from college every one of Madison’s teachers was either a clergyman or a devoutly orthodox Christian layman (Ketcham 1990, 46). And while much of the Christian aspect of his education was “relatively perfunctory,” Madison would never take an antireligious or even an anti-Christian stance (47). In fact he would advise friends to “season” their studies “with a little divinity now and then” so as not to “neglect to have our names enrolled in the Annals of Heaven” (52). Despite this, there is no evidence that Madison was ever more than conventionally religious as a youth or as a college student (56).

Though not inclined to religious speculation, Madison is described as adhering to a “calm faith in a moral, orderly universe presided over by a God beyond the limited capacity of man to fully conceive or understand” (Ketcham 1990, 667). In his first inaugural Madison would describe the “sentiments and intentions” that would guide him

to fulfill his duties as president. Included among these is his intent “to avoid the slightest interference with the right of conscience or the functions of religion, so wisely exempted from civil jurisdiction.” He would close the short, ten minute address by stating that he would rely on the intelligence and virtue of his fellow citizens as well as the “guardianship and guidance of that Almighty Being whose power regulates the destiny of nations, whose blessings have been so conspicuously dispensed to this rising Republic, and to whom we are bound to address our devout gratitude for the past, as well as our fervent supplications and best hopes for the future” (Madison 1809).

Madison’s second inaugural, delivered during the war with the British, has been described as “lackluster” (Ketcham 1990, 556). Ketcham has observed that the inaugural address attracted attention primarily from “opposition editors” who labeled the religious rhetoric employed as “profound hypocrisy” for evoking the “smiles of Heaven” on the war effort (556). In his opening paragraph Madison notes the weight of responsibility he felt during this “momentous period” was diminished “by a conviction that the war with a powerful nation . . . is stamped with that justice which invites the smiles of Heaven on the means of conducting it to a successful termination” (Madison 1813). As we will see Madison was not the last American president to invoke an aura of divine providence over our war efforts.

Jackson to Buchanan

With Andrew Jackson the inaugural address begins to be more oriented to the people, acknowledging the public will and the mandate of the recent election. It has been asserted that the era of popular government commenced with Jackson’s rhetoric. For Jackson public opinion, as demonstrated by the election results, mandated certain duties

for the executive and extended the president's authority. The executive was to play a central part in government and this attitude is reflected in Jackson's inaugural remarks (Korzi 2004, 30). Jackson's term of office (1829-1837) was a time of religious revival and growing nationalism. Jackson's presidency coincided with the zenith of a period often referred to as the Second Great Awakening.³⁵ It was the era of Barton Stone, Alexander Campbell and Charles Grandison Finney. However, in his two inaugural addresses Jackson would use limited religious rhetoric. Jackson would use only one example of religious rhetoric in each of his two inaugurals. This is the fewest expressions of religious rhetoric by any president who delivered two inaugural addresses.

In his first inaugural Jackson would note "the goodness of that Power whose providence mercifully protected our national infancy" and "ardent supplications" that "He will continue to make our beloved country the object of His divine care and gracious benediction" (Jackson 1829). In his second he would offer his "most fervent prayer" to "that Almighty Being" who had guided and protected America during the "infancy of our Republic" and who kept America "in His hands" (Jackson 1833).

Jackson's immediate successors would greatly increase their use of religious rhetoric. Martin Van Buren would use five examples of religious rhetoric and William Henry Harrison would use nine. Harrison's nine examples were the most for any presidential inaugural address up to that time.

Van Buren noted that his predecessors were heroes of the Revolution and men who had "expanded intellect and patriotism." Being the first president born after the Revolution, Van Buren noted he belonged "to a later age." Being conscious of these facts Van Buren said he could not "dare enter upon [his] path of duty" without permitting

³⁵ Most scholars characterize the time frame for the Second Great Awakening as 1790-1840s.

himself to “humbly” hope for the “sustaining support of an ever-watchful and beneficent Providence.” Religious privileges were still “sacredly protected” and Americans looked to the future “with ardent prayers and confiding hopes.” In closing Van Buren stated that he looked “to the gracious protection of the Divine Being” whose support he sought and “fervently” prayed that He would “look down upon us all” (Van Buren 1837).

At the age of sixty-eight, William Henry Harrison was the oldest man (before Ronald Reagan) to be inaugurated President. He would become the first president to die in office serving only thirty-two days before dying from pneumonia. His inaugural address may have contributed to his demise. Harrison delivered his inaugural address in the cold March weather without wearing a hat or a coat. The address was 8444 words long and lasted for over two hours. In terms of word length, it is the longest inaugural address of any president—longer than Franklin Roosevelt’s four inaugural addresses combined.

In his address Harrison used a total of nine religious references. He compared the tendency for republics to become monarchies under the influence of strong leaders and the hopes for liberties that accompany those transitions to being similar to “the false Christs whose coming was foretold by the Savior.”

In terms of policy, Harrison said he could conceive of no program that was “more likely to propitiate an impartial and common Creator, than a rigid adherence to the principles of justice on the part of a powerful nation in its transactions with a weaker and uncivilized people [our aboriginal neighbors]...” He would refer to “that Almighty Power” and state that Americans did not recognize government “by divine right” and that they believed “the Beneficent Creator has made no distinction amongst men.” Our

sovereignty cannot interfere with “one’s faith” or “prescribe forms of worship,” Harrison said. The American citizen derives no “charter granted by his fellow man” but claims the privileges and advantages that flow from government “because he is a man, fashioned by the same Almighty hand as the rest of his species and entitled to a full share of the blessings with which He has endowed them.”

Harrison would conclude his address by stating:

“I deem the present occasion sufficiently important and solemn to justify me in expressing to my fellow-citizens a profound reverence for the Christian religion and a thorough conviction that sound morals, religious liberty, and a just sense of religious responsibility are essentially connected with all true and lasting happiness; and to that good Being who has blessed us by the gifts of civil and religious freedom, who watched over and prospered the labors of our fathers and has hitherto preserved to us institutions far exceeding in excellence those of any other people, let us unite in fervently commending every interest of our beloved country in all future time.” (WH Harrison 1841).

After Harrison’s death John Tyler became the first vice-president to assume the office of the presidency due to the death of a president. Although he did not have a formal inaugural ceremony Tyler chose to deliver remarks upon accepting the office of president to cabinet members and others who attended his swearing-in at Brown's Hotel in Washington. Similar in many respects to the inaugural addresses of the time, Tyler would use three examples of religious rhetoric in that address. He referred to “an all-wise Providence;” “the all wise and all powerful Being who made me;” and placed his confidence in “an ever watchful and overruling Providence.”³⁶ For purposes of this study this address is not considered an inaugural address.

³⁶ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=533>, accessed October 7, 2008.

Tyler presided over a tumultuous term. He vetoed legislation reestablishing a national bank. A second bill was sent to Tyler and he vetoed it as well. As a result his entire cabinet, except for Secretary of State Daniel Webster, resigned. Outraged, the Whigs expelled Tyler from the party and demanded he resign. In his second year Tyler vetoed bills calling for higher tariffs and Whigs in Congress started impeachment proceedings that never advanced to a vote.

As the election of 1844 approached, Tyler's followers held a convention and nominated him as a third party candidate for President, but he stood no chance of victory. The Whigs nominated Henry Clay and Democrats nominated James Polk from Tennessee.

Tyler had counted on the issue of the annexation of Texas to win another term. When Polk came out publicly for Texas statehood it was obvious that Tyler had little chance of winning. Andrew Jackson sent word to Tyler that if the President withdrew from the race he would at least have the pleasure of denying the presidency to Clay. In a three-way race it was conceivable that Tyler and Polk would split their votes and Clay would win. In a two-man race Clay's chances would diminish. Tyler withdrew in late August and threw his support behind Polk. Polk would narrowly win by a plurality with 1,338,464 popular votes to Clay's 1,300,097. The Electoral College vote was 170-105. Congress could not resist directing a final insult at the President. On his final day in office Congress overrode his veto of a minor bill to fund some small ships for the government. It was the first override of a presidential veto in American history.³⁷

James Polk would assume the presidency in 1845. In his inaugural address he would "fervently invoke the aid of that Almighty Ruler of the Universe in whose hands

³⁷ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/tyler/essays/biography/4>, accessed October 8, 2008.

are the destinies of nations and of men to guard this Heaven-favored land against the mischiefs which without His guidance might arise from an unwise public policy.” He took the oath of office “With a firm reliance upon the wisdom of Omnipotence to sustain and direct me in the path of duty which I am appointed to pursue...”

Polk would later assert that the United States Government was “a common protector...of every religious sect, in their worship of the Almighty according to the dictates of their own conscience.” This government would “endure for ages to come and dispense the blessings of civil and religious liberty to distant generations.”

Polk would close his inaugural address by “again humbly supplicating that Divine Being who has watched over and protected our beloved country from its infancy to the present hour to continue His gracious benedictions upon us, that we may continue to be a prosperous and happy people” (Polk 1845).

Keeping a promise that he made during his presidential campaign, Polk did not seek a second term. After leaving office he and his wife toured through several Southern states. He became ill during the trip and returned to his home in Nashville. His illness became progressively worse and he died less than three months after leaving office on June 15, 1849. A Presbyterian his entire life, Polk was baptized a Methodist one week before his death.

Zachary Taylor would deliver a relatively short inaugural address in 1849 containing only 1088 words. He would use three examples of religious rhetoric. He would assert that “the dictates of religion direct us to the cultivation of peaceful and friendly relations with all other powers.” After congratulating the American people “upon the high state of prosperity to which the goodness of Divine Providence has

conducted our common country,” Taylor asked the American people to “invoke a continuance of the same protecting care” and to “seek to deserve that continuance by prudence and moderation in our councils, by well-directed attempts to assuage the bitterness which too often marks unavoidable differences of opinion, by the promulgation and practice of just and liberal principles, and by an enlarged patriotism, which shall acknowledge no limits but those of our own widespread Republic” (Taylor 1849).

Taylor died suddenly on July 9, 1850. He was succeeded by his vice-president Millard Fillmore. Fillmore, a Unitarian, gave no formal inaugural address upon taking office. Fillmore’s term was marked by increasing tension over the slavery issue. Fillmore thought about not running for a new term in 1852 but belatedly decided to seek the Whig nomination. He lost the nomination to General Winfield Scott who would go on to lose to Franklin Pierce.

Pierce, whose personal life and administration would be touched by tragedy (see Chapter III), would be the seventh in a line of eight straight presidents who would serve one term (or less). In his inaugural address Pierce would use the word “Providence” on four separate occasions. He spoke of the Revolution and noted that it was “prosecuted to its consummation” under “the guidance of a manifest and beneficent Providence.” It was the Union, “under Providence,” that had provided the prosperity enjoyed by America. And we could not depend on the wisdom of man to sustain the Union as “there is no national security but in the nation’s humble, acknowledged dependence upon God and His overruling Providence” because “beautiful as our fabric is, no earthly power or wisdom could ever reunite its broken fragments.” Pierce concluded by stating that he could “express no better hope for my country than that the kind Providence which smiled

upon our fathers may enable their children to preserve the blessings they have inherited” (Pierce 1853).

Pierce became the only elected president who sought and was denied the nomination of his party for a second term. The Democrats chose James Buchanan over Pierce and Stephen Douglas. Buchanan would go on to win election by defeating the nominee of the newly formed Republican Party, James Fremont, and former president Millard Fillmore running on the Know-Nothing party ticket.

Buchanan had long coveted the presidential nomination but had serious doubts about the 1856 election. Noting that he had desired the nomination in previous elections Buchanan said that he “would hesitate to take it [in 1856]. Before many years the abolitionists will bring war upon this land. It may come during the next presidential term.” Of course the war did come but not in Buchanan’s term.

In his inaugural address, Buchanan would begin by stating that in “entering upon this great office I must humbly invoke the God of our fathers for wisdom and firmness to execute its high and responsible duties” in an attempt “to restore harmony and ancient friendship among the people of the several States.” He asked for the support of the American people “in sustaining all just measures calculated to perpetuate...the richest political blessings which Heaven has ever bestowed upon any nation.” He repeated his previous pledge not to seek re-election.

While there were certainly sectional differences that were straining the bonds of the Union, Buchanan said he felt “an humble confidence that the kind Providence which inspired our fathers with wisdom to frame the most perfect form of government and union ever devised by man will not suffer it to perish until it shall have been peacefully

instrumental by its example in the extension of civil and religious liberty throughout the world.” The basic principle of religious liberty is a theme that is often repeated by presidents. The United States was and, in many respects, still is exceptional and historic in providing for protection of religious freedom. Buchanan and other presidents used rhetoric that shows an awareness of that fact.

Buchanan stated that immigrants, “after becoming citizens,” were entitled to the full range of protections and liberties enjoyed by native born citizens and America must extend those liberties to “those exiles from foreign shores who may seek in this country to improve their condition and to enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty.” We should “cultivate peace, commerce, and friendship with all nations” not only as “the best means of promoting our own material interests, but in a spirit of Christian benevolence toward our fellow-men.” He would conclude by stating: “I shall now proceed to take the oath prescribed by the Constitution, whilst humbly invoking the blessing of Divine Providence on this great people” (Buchanan 1857).

Abraham Lincoln

While Lincoln’s first inaugural was an attempt to defuse the existing political situation and restore peace and order to the republic, his second inaugural is *sui generis* in its religious content and substance. Lincoln carves out a place for himself not simply as a popular leader charged with administering the government but as the nation’s moral leader as well. One of the shorter inaugural addresses, containing only 699 words, Lincoln’s second is replete with religious rhetoric. Indeed, it is theological.

When Lincoln asserted that both the North and the South “read the same Bible and pray to the same God,” he was emphasizing the common religious heritage of

Americans. And although he noted it was “strange” that any man would request God’s help “in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces,” he was quick to add the admonition of Matthew 7:1 for man to “judge not, that we be not judged.” The first part of this particular section was probably inspired by Genesis 3:19— “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (KJV). Lincoln also quoted Matthew 18:7 and stated “Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.” Lincoln did not note specifically these two quotations were from the book of Matthew. He probably assumed the content would be familiar to his audience and he did not need to state he was quoting the Bible or specify chapter and verse. Likewise, Lincoln did not continue the lesson from this particular passage and advise his audience, as the scripture does, to cut off an offending hand or foot or to pluck out an offending eye (Matthew 18:8-9). His message was reconciliation and not revenge.

Lincoln went on to assert that slavery was an offense that God had deemed it was time “to remove” and that the Civil War, “this terrible war,” was “the woe due to those by whom the offense came.” If the war was God’s judgment for the evils of slavery and if it was to continue “until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword,” then it was fitting since, as the Psalmist said, “the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”³⁸

Calling for the nation to finish the war and bind up the nation’s wounds, Lincoln sought to begin the healing process with the phrase: “[w]ith malice toward none, with charity for all” (Lincoln 1865). This short inaugural address can be seen as establishing

³⁸ Quoting without attribution Psalms 19:9 (KJV).

Lincoln as the theological and moral leader of the nation. His interpretation and use of the Bible in this manner was unique for presidents in an inaugural address.

Frederick Douglass was in attendance at Lincoln's inaugural. At a reception following the speech Lincoln asked Douglass what he thought of the speech. "It was," Douglass replied, "a sacred effort" (Morel 2000, 163).

Following Lincoln's assassination, Andrew Johnson became president. He did not deliver an inaugural address but gave a short speech (357 words) upon his swearing in as president. Stating that he had "long labored to ameliorate and elevate the condition of the great mass of the American people," Johnson said that he had endeavored to provide "an honest advocacy of the great principles of free government" in his public career. "The [d]uties have been mine," Johnson declared, but the "consequences are God's."³⁹

Grant to Cleveland

In his two inaugural addresses, Ulysses S. Grant would use a total of six religious references. In his 1869 Address Grant would take note of the debt left by the Civil War but also note that "it looks as though Providence had bestowed upon us a strongbox in the precious metals locked up in the sterile mountains of the far West" to help in the economic recovery. He stated that all divisions of the country—"geographical, political, and religious"—could join in feeling national pride. Many new questions would confront America in the next four years due to the War. They could only be answered by providing for the "security of person, property, and free religious and political opinion in every part of our common country, without regard to local prejudice." He concluded the

³⁹ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=535>, accessed October 14, 2008.

address by asking for “the prayers of the nation to Almighty God” to help complete the healing of the Union (Grant 1869).

Grant’s second inaugural would include only two references of a religious nature. His opening sentence noted that he had been called “[u]nder Providence...a second time to act as Executive over this great nation.” Grant would later state that he did not share the apprehension of some over territorial expansion. He asserted that he believed “our Great Maker is preparing the world, in His own good time, to become one nation, speaking one language, and when armies and navies will be no longer required” (Grant 1873).

Rutherford B. Hayes won the 1876 election only after the creation of a special commission to decide disputed electoral votes. Because of the tension surrounding his election, Hayes secretly took the oath of office on Saturday, March 3, 1877, in the Red Room of the White House. Hayes never adopted a particular religion but attended the Methodist Church with his wife.⁴⁰ Like Grant’s second inaugural address, the address of Rutherford B. Hayes contained only two religious references. He noted that emancipation was a “providential act” even though this was not generally conceded throughout the country.

Hayes would conclude his address with the statement: “Looking for the guidance of that Divine Hand by which the destinies of nations and individuals are shaped, I call upon you...to unite with me in an earnest effort to secure to our country the blessings, not only of material prosperity, but of justice, peace, and union... ‘and that all things may be so ordered and settled upon the best and surest foundations that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations.’”

⁴⁰ <http://www.rbhayes.org/hayes/visitors/display.asp?id=366&subj=visitors>, accessed October 14, 2008.

(Hayes 1877). The final sentence of the address quoted the 1871 Episcopal Book of Common Prayer without reference.

Hayes had announced in advance that he would serve only one term and retired to his home in Fremont, Ohio, in 1881.

James Garfield was an eight-term Congressman from Ohio. Garfield had experienced a religious conversion in 1850, at age eighteen, and was baptized into the denomination of his parents, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Both James and his wife, Lucretia, were devout members of this relatively new Protestant denomination.⁴¹

Shortly before the Republican convention in 1880 the Ohio legislature had elected him to the United States Senate. However presidential politics intervened before he was sworn in as a Senator. At the Chicago convention Garfield supported Treasury Secretary John Sherman against former president Ulysses S. Grant and Senator James Blaine. The convention deadlocked over the first thirty-three ballots with Grant leading. Finally delegates began to move to Garfield and he was nominated on the thirty-sixth ballot. In one of the closest presidential elections in history, Garfield went on to beat the Democratic nominee Winfield S. Hancock in the popular vote by a mere 7,368 votes, less than one-tenth of one percent of the total votes cast.

At his inaugural on March 4, 1881, Garfield spoke of the ongoing plight of “the negro race” or “the emancipated race.” They had “made remarkable progress,” he said,

⁴¹ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/garfield/essays/biography/2>, accessed October 16, 2008.

“[w]ith unquestioning devotion to the Union, with a patience and gentleness not born of fear, they have ‘followed the light as God gave them to see the light.’”⁴²

In a similar vein Garfield noted it was a “sacred duty of those now living to educate their successors...” In doing so, he said, “sections and races should be forgotten and partisanship should be unknown. Let our people find a new meaning in the divine oracle which declares that ‘a little child shall lead them,’ for our own little children will soon control the destinies of the Republic” (quoting Isaiah 11:6 [KJV] without reference). In fifty years today’s children would “not be divided in their opinions concerning our controversies. They will surely bless their fathers and their fathers’ God that the Union was preserved, that slavery was overthrown, and that both races were made equal before the law.”

Garfield would also address the controversy with the Mormon Church. He noted that “the Constitution guarantees absolute religious freedom” and that “Congress is prohibited from making any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Since the Territories of the United States were subject to the direct legislative authority of the Congress it was a “reproach to the Government” that this constitutional guaranty was not being enjoyed by the people. The Mormon Church not only offended “the moral sense of manhood by sanctioning polygamy,” it also prevented the “administration of justice through ordinary instrumentalities of law.” And while Congress had to respect the “conscientious convictions and religious scruples of every citizen,” Garfield asserted that Congress had a duty to “prohibit...all criminal practices,

⁴² Perhaps alluding to Luke 11:33 (King James Version): “No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.”

especially of that class which destroy the family relations and endanger social order.” Further, no “ecclesiastical organization” could be “permitted to usurp in the smallest degree the functions and powers of the National Government.” Garfield’s assertion was an ironic use of religious freedom to oppress Mormons.

Garfield would close his address by “reverently” invoking the “support and blessings of Almighty God” (Garfield 1881).

On July 2, 1881, Garfield was shot in the back as he walked with Secretary of State Blaine in Washington’s train station. Doctors were unable to remove the bullet, which was lodged in the President's pancreas. On September 19, 1881, the President died of blood poisoning and complications from the shooting.

The assassin, Charles J. Guiteau was known around Washington as an emotionally disturbed man. He shot Garfield because of the President’s refusal to appoint him to a European consulship. On the day Garfield died, Guiteau wrote to now President Chester A. Arthur, “My inspiration is a godsend to you and I presume that you appreciate it. . . . Never think of Garfield’s removal as murder. It was an act of God, resulting from a political necessity for which he was responsible.” At his trial, the jury deliberated only one hour before returning a guilty verdict. Guiteau was executed on June 30, 1882, convinced that he had done God’s work.

Garfield was succeeded by his vice-president, Chester A. Arthur. Arthur was the son of a fervent abolitionist preacher who moved his family from one Baptist parish to the next throughout New York and Vermont.⁴³ Arthur did not deliver an inaugural address. Shortly after Garfield’s death the new president issued a proclamation noting

⁴³ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/arthur/essays/biography/1>, accessed October 16, 2008.

that “in His inscrutable wisdom it has pleased God to remove from us the illustrious head of the nation.” The grief experienced by American citizens over this event should “manifest itself with one accord toward the throne of infinite grace” and they should “bow before the Almighty” and seek consolation. The proclamation went on to declare that it was his “sacred duty” to appoint a day of mourning and he recommended that “all the people assemble...in their respective places of divine worship” to render their “tribute of sorrowful submission to the will of Almighty God...”⁴⁴

During his term Arthur had been diagnosed with Bright’s disease, then a deadly kidney ailment. He kept the diagnosis secret and did not actively seek re-nomination in 1884. He did not, however, prevent others from placing his name in nomination at the Republican convention. He lost the nomination on the fourth ballot to his former Secretary of State, James Blaine. Arthur died on November 18, 1886.

Grover Cleveland would become the only person to be elected president, defeated and then win re-election four years after leaving office. He delivered two inaugural addresses. In his first he would make only two religious references. He asked the American people to “renew the pledge of our devotion to the Constitution, which” had been “launched by the founders of the Republic and consecrated by their prayers and patriotic devotion,” Cleveland closed the address by stating Americans could “not trust to human effort alone” the effort to secure the “full benefits of the best form of government” but that they must “humbly” acknowledge “the power and goodness of Almighty God, who presides over the destiny of nations, and who has at all times been

⁴⁴ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=68897>, accessed October 16, 2008.

revealed in our country's history" and "invoke His aid and His blessings upon our labors" (Cleveland 1885).

Cleveland would lose his effort at re-election in 1888 to Benjamin Harrison, the grandson of President William Henry Harrison. Cleveland would win the popular vote (48.6 percent to 47.9 percent) but would lose the Electoral College 233 to 168.

Sandwiched between the two nonconsecutive terms of Grover Cleveland was the presidency of Benjamin Harrison. Harrison's inaugural address would include three examples of religious rhetoric. He spoke of the covenant between him and the American people and the American people with each other to "support and defend the Constitution." In doing so, Harrison said, "we may reverently invoke and confidently expect the favor and help of Almighty God—that He will give to me wisdom, strength, and fidelity, and to our people a spirit of fraternity and a love of righteousness and peace."

Noting that it was the one hundredth anniversary of Washington's first inaugural, Harrison recounted some of the advances Americans had seen including the fact that "[t]he influences of religion have been multiplied and strengthened." Americans had been blessed. "No other people have a government more worthy of their respect and love or a land so magnificent in extent, so pleasant to look upon, and so full of generous suggestion to enterprise and labor," Harrison said. "God has placed upon our head a diadem and has laid at our feet power and wealth beyond definition or calculation" (B Harrison 1889).

After his defeat of Harrison and election to a second term in 1892, Cleveland would deliver his second Inaugural address. He pledged “before God and these witnesses” to an “unreserved and complete devotion to the interests and welfare of those who have honored me” with election. He compared the health of the nation’s economy with that of a man and said that: “It can not be doubted that our stupendous achievements as a people and our country’s robust strength have given rise to heedlessness of those laws governing our national health which we can no more evade than human life can escape the laws of God and nature.”

He would close the address by stating:

“Above all, I know there is a Supreme Being who rules the affairs of men and whose goodness and mercy have always followed the American people, and I know He will not turn from us now if we humbly and reverently seek His powerful aid” (Cleveland 1893).

William McKinley

The religious background and influences of William McKinley are explored in more depth in the following chapter. For purposes of this section I will examine his two inaugural addresses. In terms of religious rhetoric he averaged five examples in his inaugural addresses—more than either of the two presidents who preceded him or the three that succeeded him.

In his first Inaugural Address, McKinley stated that he assumed “the arduous and responsible duties of President of the United States” with a reliance on “the support of my countrymen and invoking the guidance of Almighty God. Our faith,” McKinley said, “teaches that there is no safer reliance than upon the God of our fathers, who has so singularly favored the American people in every national trial, and who will not forsake us so long as we obey His commandments and walk humbly in His footsteps.” McKinley

would later assert that Americans “may have failed in the discharge of our full duty as citizens of the great Republic,” but it was “encouraging to realize that free speech, a free press, free thought, free schools, the free and unmolested right of religious liberty and worship, and free and fair elections are dearer and more universally enjoyed today than ever before. These guaranties must be sacredly preserved and wisely strengthened.”

These were not the only policies that McKinley addressed with religious references. He also pronounced that “[i]lliteracy must be banished from the land” if America was to “attain that high destiny as the foremost of the enlightened nations of the world which, under Providence, we ought to achieve.”

He would close the address by repeating the words of the Constitutional oath of office he had taken and state that this was “the obligation I have reverently taken before the Lord Most High. To keep it will be my single purpose, my constant prayer” (McKinley 1897). There were a total of six religious references in this address.

His second Inaugural Address would contain fewer religious references (four) than his first. He stated that when he took the oath of office four years earlier America “stood on the brink of war without the people knowing it.” We had successfully concluded the Spanish-American War and America was “now at peace with the world.” McKinley said it was his “fervent prayer that if differences arise between us and other powers they may be settled by peaceful arbitration and that hereafter we may be spared the horrors of war.” As he commenced his second term McKinley said he was cognizant of the great responsibilities of the office and promised his “unreserved devotion” to the duties of president. In fulfilling those duties he would “reverently” invoke “the direction and favor of Almighty God” for guidance.

“Distrust of the capacity, integrity, and high purposes of the American people” was not an inspiring theme for future political contests,” he said. “Dark pictures and gloomy forebodings are worse than useless. These only becloud, they do not help to point the way of safety and honor. ‘Hope maketh not ashamed’” (quoting Romans 5:5 [KJV] without reference). We should not fear that we will lose our freedoms by seeking to extend those freedoms to other countries. America would “demonstrate its fitness to administer any new estate which events devolve upon it and in the fear of God will ‘take occasion by the hand and make the bounds of freedom wider yet’” (McKinley 1901). The last phrase was from a poem entitled *To the Queen* by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Teddy Roosevelt to Hoover

Following the assassination of McKinley in September, 1901, Teddy Roosevelt became president. He delivered no address following his swearing in. He was re-elected in 1904 and delivered the third shortest Inaugural Address in history (behind Washington’s second and Lincoln’s second). Consisting of only 983 words, Roosevelt would use only one reference of religious rhetoric. He opened his address by stating that: “No people on earth have more cause to be thankful than ours, and this is said reverently, in no spirit of boastfulness in our own strength, but with gratitude to the Giver of Good who has blessed us with the conditions which have enabled us to achieve so large a measure of well-being and of happiness” (T Roosevelt 1905).

Roosevelt’s minimal use of religious rhetoric started a trend that appears to have influenced his immediate successors. The Inaugural Addresses of Taft and Wilson would also contain minimal references of a religious nature.

After winning election in 1904 to a full term, Roosevelt vowed not to run again. Having served nearly all of McKinley's second term, Roosevelt felt that he had, in effect, served two terms and would follow the precedent of previous presidents and not seek a third. Roosevelt came to regret that promise prior to the 1908 election. Even though he felt his agenda was unfinished, Roosevelt fulfilled his commitment and supported his chosen successor, William Howard Taft.

In his 1909 Inaugural Address, William Howard Taft would make only two religious references. He asserted that America had acquired "a position of influence among the nations that it never had before" and the policy of the United States should be to make sure its citizens enjoyed respect in foreign countries. "We should make every effort, he said, "to prevent humiliating and degrading prohibition against any of our citizens wishing temporarily to sojourn in foreign countries because of race or religion." Taft would close his address by invoking "the considerate sympathy and support of my fellow-citizens and the aid of the Almighty God" (Taft 1909).

During this period, progressivism was gradually increasing at both the local and national level. People across the nation increasingly supported expanding the role of the federal government to ensure the welfare of the people. The progressive wing of the Republican Party pressured Roosevelt to challenge Taft in 1912. Eventually he decided to throw "his hat into the ring" and run against his former Secretary of War.

Roosevelt would lose the Republican nomination to Taft but was so angered by the tactics employed by Taft's forces at the convention that he decided to leave the Republican Party and challenge the incumbent president. Running on the Progressive or

“Bull Moose” party ticket, Roosevelt would finish second to Democrat Woodrow Wilson and ahead of Taft.

Wilson would also use two examples of religious rhetoric in each of his two Inaugural Addresses. In his first Wilson asserted that government was broken and was failing to live up to the promise of our heritage. The new administration’s “duty is to cleanse, to reconsider, to restore, to correct the evil without impairing the good, to purify and humanize every process of our common life.” It would not be easy but the “feelings with which we face this new age of right and opportunity sweep across our heartstrings like some air out of God’s own presence, where justice and mercy are reconciled and the judge and the brother are one.”

His inauguration was not a “day of triumph” it was a “day of dedication” to the work ahead, Wilson said. In fulfilling this work Wilson summoned “all honest men, all patriotic, all forward-looking men” to assist him in the task. “God helping me, I will not fail them, if they will but counsel and sustain me!” (Wilson 1913).

Four years later Wilson would assert that Americans had been “forged into a new unity amidst the fires that now blaze throughout the world. In their ardent heat we shall, in God’s Providence, let us hope, be purged of faction and division, purified of the errant humors of party and of private interest, and shall stand forth in the days to come with a new dignity of national pride and spirit.” Wilson recognized the task ahead and the responsibility it required and stated: “I pray God I may be given the wisdom and the prudence to do my duty in the true spirit of this great people” (Wilson 1917). His rhetoric echoed the prayer of Solomon found in I Kings 3:9—“Give therefore thy servant

an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" (KJV)

Unlike his immediate predecessors, Warren Harding would use considerable religious rhetoric. In his Inaugural Address, Harding would use twelve examples of religious rhetoric. This was the highest number of any president up to that time and remains tied with Eisenhower's 1953 address as containing the highest number of examples of religious rhetoric in an inaugural address.

Harding would assert "there must have been God's intent in the making of this new-world Republic (America)" and that he would "rejoice to acclaim the era of the Golden Rule and crown it with the autocracy of service" [noting the Golden Rule without reference to Matthew 7:12]. Harding would reference "God" on six other times as he spoke of the "God-given destiny of our Republic;" the American people "with common concern and shared responsibility, answerable to God and country;" implored "the favor and guidance of God in His Heaven;" and noted that he took the oath of the presidency "on that passage of Holy Writ wherein it is asked: 'What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' [Quoting without reference Micah 6:8 (KJV)]. This I plight to God and country."

Harding would also state that America was "ready to encourage, eager to initiate, anxious to participate in any seemly program likely to lessen the probability of war, and promote that brotherhood of mankind which must be God's highest conception of human relationship." He stated that his "most reverent prayer for America is for industrial peace, with its rewards, widely and generally distributed, amid the inspiration of equal opportunity." He spoke of the "divine inspiration of the founding fathers;" remarked that

the ambiguity of slavery had been “effaced in a baptism of sacrifice and blood;” and that we had “seen civil, human, and religious liberty verified and glorified” (Harding 1921).

Harding’s administration was rocked with scandal including the Teapot Dome. He and his wife were in the process of a cross-country speaking tour when Harding developed what was thought to be food poisoning. The trip was cut short and the presidential party proceeded to San Francisco. Harding died of an apparent heart attack on August 2, 1923.

Harding was succeeded by Vice President Calvin Coolidge, who was sworn in by his father, a Justice of the Peace, in Plymouth Notch, Vermont. Coolidge would win election in 1924. In his Inaugural Address he would use a total of seven religious references. Coolidge would assert that if we wanted “to continue to be distinctively American, we must continue to make that term comprehensive enough to embrace the legitimate desires of a civilized and enlightened people determined in all their relations to pursue a conscientious and religious life.” We could not “permit any inquisition either within or without the law or apply any religious test to the holding of office.”

America, he said, “cherishes no purpose save to merit the favor of Almighty God” and America would “continue to stand, seeking peace and prosperity, solicitous for the welfare of the wage earner, promoting enterprise, developing waterways and natural resources, attentive to the intuitive counsel of womanhood, encouraging education, desiring the advancement of religion, supporting the cause of justice and honor among the nations.”

Peace would come to the nations of the world “when there is realization that only under a reign of law, based on righteousness and supported by the religious conviction of

the brotherhood of man...Parchment will fail, the sword will fail, it is only the spiritual nature of many that can be triumphant.” America did not seek foreign conquest and the legions sent forth were “armed, not with the sword, but with the cross.” The world peace we sought, the “higher state to which she [America] seeks the allegiance of all mankind is not of human, but of divine origin” (Coolidge 1925). His use of the word “cross” is, obviously, a specific reference to Christianity.

Coolidge believed that he was in the “clutch of forces” far greater than himself despite being “the most powerful man in the world.” He believed that Providence had its own plan for everyone, reflective of his New England Congregationalist religious roots.⁴⁵ This belief is shown by the rhetoric used in his Inaugural Address.

Coolidge was a highly visible leader. During his sixty-seven months as President, he held 520 press conferences or an average of nearly eight each month. He spoke on the radio at least monthly to national audiences. Despite this fact Coolidge was certainly cognizant of both the positive and negative possibilities of rhetoric. He once commented: “I have never been hurt by what I have not said” (Washburn 1923, 3). When Coolidge decided not to seek another term he transmitted the news in a short but succinct statement. On the morning of August 2, 1927—in the third year of his first full term—Coolidge appeared at a regularly scheduled press conference in Rapid City and gave the assembled reporters a neatly typed statement that read simply: “I do not choose to run for President in nineteen twenty-eight.” (Clemens 1945).

Coolidge’s decision led to the nomination of Herbert Hoover as the Republican candidate in 1928. His Democratic opponent would be four-term New York governor,

⁴⁵ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/coolidge/essays/biography/4>, accessed October 18, 2008.

Alfred E. Smith, a Catholic. Smith was also an opponent of prohibition. Religion and prohibition quickly emerged as the dominant issues in the campaign. No Catholic had ever been elected President, probably a consequence of the long history of anti-Catholic sentiment in America. Hoover conducted what has been described as a risk-free campaign, making only seven radio speeches to the nation. Hoover never even mentioned Al Smith by name. Despite Hoover's limited campaigning, vicious rumors and openly hateful anti-Catholic rhetoric was very prevalent in the months leading up to the election. Numerous Protestant preachers in rural areas delivered Sunday sermons warning their flocks that a vote for Smith was a vote for the Devil.⁴⁶

Hoover, a Quaker, won easily amassing 58.2% of the popular vote and crushing Smith in the Electoral College 444 to 87.

In his Inaugural Address Hoover stated that taking the oath of office as president "was the most sacred oath which can be assumed by an American citizen." But it was much more than that. It was also "a dedication and consecration under God to the highest office in service of our people." Hoover said that he took the oath and assumed "this trust in the humility of knowledge that only through the guidance of Almighty Providence can I hope to discharge its ever-increasing burdens."

In addition to the more tangible results of the election ("...maintenance of the integrity of the Constitution...vigorous enforcement of the laws...continuance of economy in public expenditure...continued regulation of business to prevent domination in the community...denial of ownership or operation of business by the Government in competition with its citizens ...avoidance of policies which would involve us in the

⁴⁶ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/hoover/essays/biography/3>, accessed October 18, 2008.

controversies of foreign nations...more effective reorganization of the departments of the Federal Government...expansion of public works; and the promotion of welfare activities affecting education and the home”) was also “the confidence and belief of the people that we would not neglect the support of the embedded ideals and aspirations of America,” including “the growth of religious spirit and the tolerance of all faiths.”

Hoover closed by asking the American people for their “tolerance...aid...and cooperation.” He also asked for “the help of Almighty God in this service to my country to which you have called me” (Hoover 1929).

Hoover’s reelection bid was doomed due to the Great Depression and few, including few Republicans, gave him much of a chance to win. A record number of voters (more than 40 million) voted in 1932. They voted overwhelmingly for Franklin D. Roosevelt, who beat Hoover by 7 million votes and captured forty-two of the forty-eight states

Franklin Roosevelt

Franklin Roosevelt is an excellent example of what might appear to be a paradox of the use of religious rhetoric. As noted elsewhere in this work, Roosevelt often used religious rhetoric in his major speeches, openly discussed his Christian heritage and did not hesitate to use religion to comfort and strengthen the American people during difficult times. His use of religious rhetoric in his four inaugural addresses demonstrated both ends of the spectrum in that regard. In his first Inaugural Address FDR used six specific religious references and in his fourth and last address he used five specific references. Sandwiched between these two addresses were two in which he used only a single general reference in each.

Roosevelt assumed office during dramatic economic turmoil. While he noted that only a “foolish optimist” could “deny the dark realities of the moment,” Roosevelt’s address is best remembered for emphasizing that the only thing Americans had to fear was “fear itself.” There were certainly “common difficulties” facing the country but they concerned “thank God, only material things.” Our economic woes were not due to a “failure of substance” but human failure to exercise good judgment in the use of those resources. We had not, Roosevelt asserted, “been stricken by... [a] plague of locusts.” [Alluding, without reference, to the plague of locusts found in Exodus 10:1-19 (KJV)]. The practices of those individuals responsible had been “indicted in the court of public opinion” and “rejected by the hearts and minds of men.”

He referred to those individuals as “money changers” and noted they had “fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization.” This, again, was a reference to the Bible and the depiction of Jesus driving out the money changers from the temple as told in Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15; and John 2:14-15 (KJV).

Roosevelt went on to say that the American people had not failed and they did not “distrust the future of essential democracy.” In this time of need the electorate had indicated a desire for “direct, vigorous action” and “discipline and direction under leadership.” He closed the address by stating that: “In this dedication of a Nation we humbly ask the blessing of God. May He protect each and every one of us. May He guide me in the days to come” (FDRoosevelt 1933).

Four years later his second Inaugural Address would contain only a single religious reference. He closed his address by noting that, as president, he assumed the leadership role in taking the road “over which they have chosen to advance.” And

“[w]hile this duty rests upon me,” Roosevelt said, “I shall do my utmost to speak their purpose and to do their will, seeking Divine guidance to help us each and every one to give light to them that sit in darkness and to guide our feet into the way of peace” (FDRoosevelt 1937).

Similarly, after being elected to an unprecedented third term, Roosevelt would use his third Inaugural Address to give the American people a motivational history lesson that recounted the many obstacles that we had overcome both in the distant and recent past. He closed by recounting what he described as the “destiny of America” being “proclaimed in words of prophecy spoken by our first President in his first Inaugural in 1789.” He stated that these words were as relevant in 1941 as they were then. He quoted Washington’s address: ‘The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered...deeply...finally, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.’

Roosevelt closed his address in a section that contained his only use of religious rhetoric:

“If you and I in this later day lose that sacred fire—if we let it be smothered with doubt and fear—then we shall reject the destiny which Washington strove so valiantly and so triumphantly to establish. The preservation of the spirit and faith of the Nation does, and will, furnish the highest justification for every sacrifice that we may make in the cause of national defense.

In the face of great perils never before encountered, our strong purpose is to protect and to perpetuate the integrity of democracy.

For this we muster the spirit of America, and the faith of America.

We do not retreat. We are not content to stand still. As Americans, we go forward, in the service of our country, by the will of God” (FDRoosevelt 1941).

Embarking on his fourth term in 1945, Roosevelt delivered the shortest of his inaugural addresses (only 556 words). This makes the address the second shortest inaugural address in history trailing only Washington's second. Despite its brevity, the address returned to content similar to his first in the use of religious rhetoric. He used a total of five references. In each he either used the word "God" or alluded to "The Almighty God."

Roosevelt started his fourth Inaugural Address by noting the ongoing military struggles. He commented that we were facing a supreme test but: "As I stand here today, having taken the solemn oath of office in the presence of my fellow countrymen—in the presence of our God—I know that it is America's purpose that we shall not fail."

The final two paragraphs of the address would state: "The Almighty God has blessed our land in many ways. He has given our people stout hearts and strong arms with which to strike mighty blows for freedom and truth. He has given to our country a faith which has become the hope of all peoples in an anguished world.

"So we pray to Him now for the vision to see our way clearly to see the way that leads to a better life for ourselves and for all our fellow men—and to the achievement of His will to peace on earth" (FDRoosevelt 1945). Roosevelt died three months later.

Truman and Eisenhower

Harry Truman had served only eighty-two days as vice president when Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945. The oath of office was administered by Chief Justice Harlan F. Stone at 7:09 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. His only public comments was the following statement released shortly thereafter;

“The world may be sure that we will prosecute the war on both fronts, east and west, with all the vigor we possess to a successful conclusion.”⁴⁷

Truman would win the presidential nomination in 1948 and face Republican New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey in the general election. Few expected Truman to win but he waged an enthusiastic campaign and won a stunning victory. In his inaugural address, Truman said he accepted the honor of election as president “with humility” and asked for the “help and the prayers” of every American.

The American people stood “firm in the faith which has inspired this Nation from the beginning,” Truman said. “We believe that all men have a right to equal justice under law and equal opportunity to share in the common good. We believe that all men have a right to freedom of thought and expression. We believe that all men are created equal because they are created in the image of God.”

The enemy facing America and “other like-minded nations” was communism.

Truman spelled out what he saw as the differences between communism and democracy:

“Communism is based on the belief that man is so weak and inadequate that he is unable to govern himself, and therefore requires the rule of strong masters.

Democracy is based on the conviction that man has the moral and intellectual capacity, as well as the inalienable right, to govern himself with reason and justice.

Communism subjects the individual to arrest without lawful cause, punishment without trial, and forced labor as the chattel of the state. It decrees what information he shall receive, what art he shall produce, what leaders he shall follow, and what thoughts he shall think.

Democracy maintains that government is established for the benefit of the individual, and is charged with the responsibility of

⁴⁷ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12390>, accessed October 21, 2008.

protecting the rights of the individual and his freedom in the exercise of those abilities of his.

Communism maintains that social wrongs can be corrected only by violence.

Democracy has proved that social justice can be achieved through peaceful change.

Communism holds that the world is so widely divided into opposing classes that war is inevitable.

Democracy holds that free nations can settle differences justly and maintain a lasting peace.”

The differences between communism and democracy did not concern only the United States, Truman said: “People everywhere are coming to realize that what is involved is material well-being, human dignity, and the right to believe in and worship God.”

In our attempt to weave “a world fabric of international security and growing prosperity,” Truman said we were aided by “all who desire freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom to live their own lives for useful ends.” Truman would close by stating: “Steadfast in our faith in the Almighty, we will advance toward a world where man's freedom is secure. To that end we will devote our strength, our resources, and our firmness of resolve. With God's help, the future of mankind will be assured in a world of justice, harmony, and peace” (Truman 1949).

Truman did not seek re-election in 1952 and would leave office as one of the most unpopular politicians in the United States. History would restore his reputation in many respects as scholars and the public were able to reflect on the difficult decisions that confronted Truman in the White House domestically and in foreign affairs.

Dwight David Eisenhower, although a Republican, was not a life-long partisan. Like other presidents before him including Washington, W.H. Harrison and Grant,

Eisenhower came to prominence due to his military exploits. As commander of Allied forces in WWII, Eisenhower earned the admiration and respect of Americans and other world citizens. In terms of his personal faith, at the time Eisenhower ran for president in 1952 he had never belonged to any organized church.⁴⁸

During the 1950s America was experiencing increased interest in religion and religious activity. Evangelists and other religious leaders like Billy Graham and Norman Vincent Peale were attracting large gatherings. Much like candidates and office holders, television also permitted religious leaders to reach a broader audience and we saw the emergence of the ‘Televangelist,’ men like Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard and Graham. Many have seen this religious dimension as an important role in the struggle against Communism during the Cold War years (Whitfield 1991). It was during the Eisenhower administration that the phrase “under God” was added to the Pledge of Allegiance and Congress adopted “In God We Trust” as the national motto.

The religious background of Eisenhower’s family is embedded in the Brethren in Christ Church (River Brethren), a branch of the Mennonite Church. Eisenhower’s parents became involved in the “Bible Student” or Russellite movement which was the predecessor of the Jehovah’s Witnesses.⁴⁹ His mother, especially, was a devout adherent to Watchtower beliefs up until her death. Although there is some evidence that Eisenhower attended services (which were often held at the Eisenhower home) there is no evidence that he ever formally joined either movement (Bergman 2000). Scholars have noted that the early influence of this theology and beliefs had an influence on the

⁴⁸ http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/GUIDES/Eisenhower_and_religion.pdf, accessed October 5, 2007.

⁴⁹ http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/GUIDES/Eisenhower_and_religion.pdf, accessed October 5, 2007.

Eisenhower children. Davis asserts that “each boy [Eisenhower and his brothers] was to retain all his life long a profound respect for the moral tenets that the parents derived, or thought they derived, from their religion.”⁵⁰ While Eisenhower and his brothers might have developed a strong religious foundation they did not subscribe to all the beliefs of the Watchtower. These beliefs included pacifism, opposition to military service, the flag salute and other patriotic activities, use of aluminum cooking utensils, fluoridation of drinking water, vaccinations and medicine in general.

Some have argued that Eisenhower consciously hid the familial connection with the Watchtower movement for political purposes during his presidential campaign. It was not the first time and certainly not the last that political opponents have attempted to use a candidate’s religious background to argue he was not fit to become president. Roy has noted:

“Both Eisenhower and Stevenson were vigorously challenged by some Protestant[s]...for their religious ties. The association of Eisenhower’s mother with the Jehovah’s Witnesses was exploited to make the GOP candidate appear as an ‘anti-Christian cultist’ and a ‘foe of patriotism.’” (Roy 1953 quoted in Bergman at page 98).

When Eisenhower graduated from West Point in 1915, his mother gave him a copy of the American Standard Version of the Bible. This was the version used by the Watchtower because it consistently used the term “Jehovah” for God. This was the Bible Eisenhower used when he was sworn in as president [See Appendix B]. Press reports of his second inaugural often note the Bible was opened to Psalm 33:12 during the ceremony but do not include the correct passage from that translation of the Bible. They

⁵⁰ Kenneth Davis, *Soldier of Democracy: A Biography of Dwight Eisenhower*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1952), p. 49 quoted in Bergman at page 89.

substitute the word “Lord” for “Jehovah” in the passage which reads: *Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah.*⁵¹

Eisenhower described himself as having a “deep Bible-centered faith” that had “colored [his] life since childhood.” He stated that he had read through the “entire Bible” before he was eighteen and discussed it “chapter by chapter” with his mother. During his eight years as president he “never opened a cabinet meeting without a minute of silent prayer.” (Bergman 2000, 102). A former speech writer, Stanley High, described Eisenhower as hoping to “inspire a spiritual awakening in America” and that Eisenhower’s goal for America was a “moral and spiritual” revival that would produce a rededication to religious values (High 1953 quoted in Bergman 2000, 103).

In his two inaugurals Eisenhower’s use of religious rhetoric would be examples of both minimal use and substantial use. In his first inaugural address, Eisenhower would match the twelve examples of religious rhetoric employed by Harding thirty-two years earlier. These remain the two addresses with the highest number of references of religious rhetoric. In his second address Eisenhower would use only two examples.

In his first inaugural Eisenhower would ask the audience to “permit” him to utter “a little private prayer.” He prayed:

“Almighty God, as we stand here at this moment my future associates in the Executive branch of Government join me in beseeching that Thou will make full and complete our dedication to the service of the people in this throng, and their fellow citizens everywhere.

Give us, we pray, the power to discern clearly right from wrong, and allow all our words and actions to be governed thereby, and by the laws of this land. Especially we pray that our concern shall be for all the people regardless of station, race or calling.

⁵¹ Psalm 33:12 (American Standard Version).

May cooperation be permitted and be the mutual aim of those who, under the concepts of our Constitution, hold to differing political faiths; so that all may work for the good of our beloved country and Thy glory.
Amen.

Eisenhower would assert that his oath as president was taken “in the presence of God” and that we must ask for “God’s guidance.” In the turbulent times confronting Americans, Eisenhower stated that we “must proclaim anew our faith. This faith is the abiding creed of our fathers. It is our faith in the deathless dignity of man, governed by eternal moral and natural laws. This faith defines our full view of life. It establishes, beyond debate, those gifts of the Creator that are man’s inalienable rights, and that make all men equal in His sight.”

There was work to be done. Freedom was “pitted against slavery; lightness against the dark.” These challenges required “a conscious renewal of faith in our country and in the watchfulness of a Divine Providence.” The task before America, “the work that awaits us all,” was “to be done with bravery, with charity, and with prayer to Almighty God” (Eisenhower 1953).

Four years later Eisenhower would employ only two examples of religious rhetoric. In contrast to the 12 references of four years earlier these two references would make Eisenhower’s second inaugural address the address with the lowest number of religious references in the last sixty years. Eisenhower would state that “Before all else, we seek, upon our common labor as a nation, the blessings of Almighty God. And the hopes in our hearts fashion the deepest prayers of our whole people.” These prayers included:

“May we pursue the right--without self-righteousness.
May we know unity--without conformity.

May we grow in strength--without pride in self.
May we, in our dealings with all peoples of the earth, ever speak truth and
serve justice” (Eisenhower 1957).

Kennedy to Ford

John F. Kennedy, young, attractive and a war hero, would become the first Catholic elected president. Kennedy addressed those concerns most notably in a speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Alliance on September 12, 1960. Kennedy would note that there were “far more critical issues” than the “so-called religious issue”—the spread of Communist influence, poverty, “an America with too many slums, with too few schools, and too late to the moon and outer space.”

Kennedy said he believed “in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute; where no Catholic prelate would tell the President—should he be Catholic—how to act, and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote; where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference, and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him, or the people who might elect him.”

He believed “in an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jewish; where no public official either requests or accept instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source; where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials, and where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all.” An America “where religious intolerance will someday end” and a President’s views on religion “are his own

private affair, neither imposed upon him by the nation, nor imposed by the nation upon him.”

Kennedy asserted he was “not the Catholic candidate for President,” but “the Democratic Party’s candidate for President who happens also to be a Catholic.” And if the “time should ever come...when [his] office would require me to either violate my conscience or violate the national interest,” Kennedy said that he would resign the office.

If he was successful and won the election Kennedy said he could, without reservation, “solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution -- so help me God.”⁵²

On the day before Kennedy’s speech in Houston, his opponent, Vice-president Richard Nixon, would appear on “*Meet the Press*” and assert that he had “no doubt whatever about Senator Kennedy’s loyalty to his country and...that he would put the Constitution...above any other consideration.” Nixon stated that he did not believe “there is a religious issue as far as Senator Kennedy is concerned” and that it would be “tragic” for the election to be “determined primarily or even substantially on religious grounds.”⁵³

While his religion was controversial in his campaign for election, it did not prevent Kennedy from using religious rhetoric in his Inaugural Address.

Kennedy would begin what is considered one of the great inaugural addresses by asserting that his election was not “a victory of party but a celebration of freedom.” It symbolized “an end as well as a beginning...renewal as well as change.” Kennedy linked

⁵² <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfkhoustonministers.html>, accessed October 21, 2008.

⁵³ *New York Times*, “Nixon’s TV Remarks on Issue of Religion,” September 12, 1960, p. 19.

himself to his predecessors by stating he had “sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago.”

But the world confronting Americans today was very different from the world of our forefathers. This was because, Kennedy said, “...man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet,” he said, “the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.”

Kennedy would make a request to “those nations who would make themselves our adversary.” He suggested “both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah—to undo the heavy burdens . . . (and) let the oppressed go free.” [Quoting Isaiah 58:6 (KJV)]. He noted that every generation of Americans had been tested. Each generation since “this country was founded... [had] been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.” This was such a time: “Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need—not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, ‘rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation’—a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.” [Quoting without reference a passage from Romans 12:12 (KJV)].

Kennedy would conclude with what is perhaps the best known phrase from an inaugural address:

“And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.”

But Americans and citizens of the world should ask for “the same high standards of strength and sacrifice” from those present. Kennedy concluded by stating: “With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own” (Kennedy 1961).

Following Kennedy’s assassination on November 22, 1963, Vice-president Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as the thirty-sixth president on Air Force One as it returned the body of the slain president to Washington. When the plane landed, he briefly addressed the American people: “This is a sad time for all people. We have suffered a loss that cannot be weighed. For me, it is a deep personal tragedy. I know that the world shares the sorrow that Mrs. Kennedy and her family bear. I will do my best. That is all I can do. I ask for your help—and God’s.”⁵⁴

Lyndon Johnson was a member of the Christian Church, also called the Disciples of Christ. President Johnson’s great-grandfather, George Washington Baines, Sr., was one of the best known Baptist leaders in the early history of Texas. A well known pastor he also served as president of Baylor University. President Johnson’s grandfather, Sam Ealy Johnson, Sr., was raised a Baptist but became a member of the Christian Church. Both the president’s grandfather and father joined the Christadelphian Church.

President Johnson was baptized in 1923 in the Pedernales River while attending a summertime revival meeting service of the First Christian Church of Johnson City. He

⁵⁴ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25976>., accessed October 21, 2008.

considered this church his “home church.” While in Washington he frequently attended services at the National City Christian Church.⁵⁵

Johnson was overwhelmingly elected in 1964 defeating Barry Goldwater. In his 1965 Inaugural Address Johnson would use five examples of religious rhetoric. His use of the word “God” was very similar to the rhetoric used by Kennedy four years earlier.

Johnson opened his address by asserting “On this occasion the oath I have taken before you and before God is not mine alone, but ours together.” He spoke of an American ‘covenant’ that included justice, self-government and union. Under this covenant America had prospered, Johnson said, “[b]ut we have no promise from God that our greatness will endure. We have been allowed by Him to seek greatness with the sweat of our hands and the strength of our spirit.” This generation, like previous generations, would have to earn their heritage again. Johnson admonished his fellow citizens that “[i]f we fail now then we will have forgotten in abundance what we learned in hardship: that democracy rests on faith, that freedom asks more than it gives, and the judgment of God is harshest on those who are most favored.”

By working together with a common purpose we could increase the bounty for everyone. “We have discovered,” Johnson said, “that every child who learns, and every man who finds work, and every sick body that is made whole—like a candle added to an altar—brightens the hope of all the faithful.”

Johnson emphasized the words that he had expressed after Kennedy’s assassination that he would “lead” and “do the best” he could. But the American people

⁵⁵ http://www.liblib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/FAQs/Religion/religion_hm.asp, accessed October 13, 2008

should “look within your own hearts to the old promises and to the old dreams” to lead them. Johnson closed with:

“For myself, I ask only in the words of an ancient leader: ‘Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?’” [Quoting without reference Solomon’s prayer for wisdom found in 2 Chronicles 1:10] (Johnson 1965).

Mired down in the quagmire of Viet Nam, Johnson chose not to seek re-election in 1968. The Democratic Party was deeply divided in 1968. Following the emergence of the anti-war movement, Eugene McCarthy and the assassination of Bobby Kennedy, their nominee, Johnson’s vice-president Hubert Humphrey, had little chance to defeat Republican Richard Nixon.

Nixon, of course, had lost the presidency to John Kennedy in 1960 and then lost the California governorship in 1962. In 1968 Nixon would defeat California governor Ronald Reagan to obtain the Republican nomination and almost guaranteed victory in November. The second Quaker to win the presidency (Hoover being the first), Nixon would use eight examples of religious rhetoric in his first inaugural address.

He quoted Franklin Roosevelt’s statement in his 1933 inaugural address that America’s economic troubles concerned “thank God, only material things.” But the crisis facing American today was the opposite of that confronting Roosevelt’s era. “Our crisis today, Nixon said, “is in reverse... We find ourselves rich in goods, but ragged in spirit.” To find the answer to this crisis “we need only look within ourselves.” Alluding to Lincoln’s 1861 inaugural address Nixon said that “When we listen to ‘the better angels of our nature,’ we find that they celebrate the simple things, the basic things--such as goodness, decency, love, kindness.”

Later, speaking of the ongoing struggle for civil rights, Nixon would state that “black and white” had to live together “as one nation, not two.” The laws have caught up with our conscience, Nixon said, [w]hat remains is to give life to what is in the law: to insure at last that as all are born equal in dignity before God, all are born equal in dignity before man.”

Nixon said he had “taken an oath today in the presence of God and my countrymen to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States.” To that oath he committed to consecrate the office of the presidency with his “energies and all the wisdom I can summon to the cause of peace among nations.” The peace we sought was not “victory over any other people” but “the peace that comes ‘with healing in its wings;’⁵⁶ with compassion...with understanding [and] with the opportunity for all the peoples of this earth to choose their own destiny.”

Nixon’s noted the recent success of Apollo 8, the first manned spacecraft to orbit the moon, and said that “[o]nly a few short weeks ago we shared the glory of man’s first sight of the world as God sees it, as a single sphere reflecting light in the darkness. As the Apollo astronauts flew over the moon’s gray surface on Christmas Eve, they spoke to us of the beauty of earth—and in that voice so clear across the lunar distance, we heard them invoke God’s blessing on its goodness.” Nixon said that America’s “destiny offers not the cup of despair, but the chalice of opportunity.” He appealed to the American people to seize the opportunity “not in fear, but in gladness;” that we should “go forward,

⁵⁶ Perhaps alluding without reference to Malachi 4:2: “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall” (KJV).

firm in our faith, steadfast in our purpose, cautious of the dangers, but sustained by our confidence in the will of God and the promise of man” (Nixon 1969).

Nixon would win re-election in 1972 amid growing controversies that would ultimately result in impeachment proceedings and resignation. At this second inaugural Nixon would only use four references of religious rhetoric.

Despite his personal political problems, Nixon’s second inaugural was optimistic and challenged the American people saying: “We have the chance today to do more than ever before in our history to make life better in America—to ensure better education, better health, better housing, better transportation, a cleaner environment—to restore respect for law, to make our communities more livable--and to ensure the God-given right of every American to full and equal opportunity.”

The next four years would be vitally important as we pursued those goals, Nixon said: “We shall answer to God, to history, and to our conscience for the way in which we use these years.”

Nixon would close his second Inaugural Address by asking for the prayers of the American people “that in the years ahead I may have God’s help in making decisions that are right for America, and I pray for your help so that together we may be worthy” of the challenges ahead. He asked Americans to pledge to make the “next four years the best four years in America’s history,” so that the approaching bicentennial would find an America that is “as young and as vital as when it began, and as bright a beacon of hope for all the world.”

He concluded his address with: “Let us go forward from here confident in hope, strong in our faith in one another, sustained by our faith in God who created us, and striving always to serve His purpose” (Nixon 1973).

When Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974, Gerald Ford became the first president who was not elected to either the presidency or vice-presidency. On October 10, 1973, Spiro Agnew had become the second Vice President to resign. Unlike John C. Calhoun, who resigned in 1832 to take a seat in the Senate, Agnew resigned as part of a plea bargain in a criminal case. Agnew later pleaded *nolo contendere* (no contest) to criminal charges of tax evasion and money laundering. His resignation triggered the first use of the 25th Amendment to fill a vacancy in the vice-presidency. Nixon appointed Gerald Ford, the House Minority Leader, as Agnew’s successor. It remains one of only two times that the amendment has been employed to fill a vice-presidential vacancy.

Shortly after taking the oath of office, Ford would address the American people in a televised address. He assured them that he was “acutely aware that you have not elected me as your President by your ballots, and so I ask you to confirm me as your President with your prayers.” Further he hoped that “such prayers” would “be the first of many.”

“Our long national nightmare” was over, Ford said, and it showed that “[o]ur Constitution works; our great Republic is a government of laws and not of men. Here the people rule. But there is a higher Power, by whatever name we honor Him, who ordains not only righteousness but love, not only justice but mercy.”

As we sought to “bind up the internal wounds of Watergate, more painful and more poisonous than those of foreign wars,” Ford implored the American people to

“restore the golden rule to our political process, and let brotherly love purge our hearts of suspicion and of hate.”

Ford said that he asked for the prayers of Americans not only for himself but “for Richard Nixon and for his family. May our former President, who brought peace to millions, find it for himself. May God bless and comfort his wonderful wife and daughters, whose love and loyalty will forever be a shining legacy to all who bear the lonely burdens of the White House.”

Ford closed by stating that he solemnly reaffirmed his promise “to uphold the Constitution, to do what is right as God gives me to see the right, and to do the very best I can for America.

God helping me,” he said, “I will not let you down.”⁵⁷

Ford would lose his bid for election in 1976 to Jimmy Carter.

Carter to Bush(43)

When Jimmy Carter ran for president he was a “born-again” Christian and a life-long Southern Baptist. E. J. Dionne, a columnist for the *Washington Post* and Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institute, has referred to Carter, “as a person, [is] as religious a president as we’ve had.”⁵⁸ There are those who argue it was his evangelical Christian beliefs that helped him to appeal to white Southern voters and helped to invigorate the growing conservative Christian movement that would become more prominent in the coming years. Because of the Southern Baptist Convention’s increasingly conservative

⁵⁷ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4409>, accessed October 21, 2008

⁵⁸ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jesus/president/religion.html>, accessed October 9, 2007.

views (especially on the role of women) Carter renounced his ties with the SBC in 2000.⁵⁹

Despite his very strong personal religious beliefs, Carter would use less religious rhetoric in his Inaugural Address than his immediate predecessors and successors. In his address, Carter would note that there were two Bibles used in his inaugural ceremony. One was what is known as the “Washington Bible,” the Bible used by Washington at the first inaugural and carefully preserved ever since. The other was a Bible Carter’s mother had given him “just a few years ago.” He quoted the verse from Micah where that Bible had been opened: “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”⁶⁰ He would later state Americans must “learn together and laugh together and work together and pray together confident that in the end we will triumph together in the right.”

Carter expressed “hope that when my time as your President has ended, people might say this about our Nation:

--that we had remembered the words of Micah and renewed our search for humility, mercy, and justice;

--that we had torn down the barriers that separated those of different race and region and religion, and where there had been mistrust, built unity, with a respect for diversity...” (Carter 1977).

Mired in the hostage crisis in Iran and economic disaster at home, Carter survived a challenge in the Democratic primaries from Ted Kennedy in 1980 but was beaten decisively by Ronald Reagan.

⁵⁹ <http://edition.cnn.com/2000/ALLPOLITICS/stories/10/20/carter.baptists.ap/>, accessed October 9, 2007.

⁶⁰ Micah 6:8 (KJV).

In his first inaugural address, Reagan stated that Americans “have every right to dream heroic dreams . . . Your dreams, your hopes, your goals are going to be the dreams, the hopes, and the goals of this administration, so help me God.” Reagan went on to state that he had been told “that tens of thousands of prayer meetings [were] being held on this day and for that” Reagan said, he was “deeply grateful. We are a nation under God,” he asserted, “and I believe God intended for us to be free. It would be fitting and good, I think, if on each Inaugural Day in future years it should be declared a day of prayer.”

Reagan would close the address by telling the story of a World War I soldier who had memorialized his pledge to sacrifice for an American victory in a diary. Our current difficulties, Reagan said, did not require the same sort of sacrifice. They did, however, require “our best effort and our willingness to believe in ourselves and to believe in our capacity to perform great deeds, to believe that together with God’s help we can and will resolve the problems which now confront us.”

He concluded by stating: “God bless you, and thank you” (Reagan 1981).

Reagan would increase his use of religious rhetoric in his second inaugural address from the six references in his first inaugural to ten. Early in the address he expressed a “God bless and welcome back” to Senator John Stennis and asked the audience to bow in silent prayer in memory of Louisiana Representative Gillis Long who had died the night before. He mentioned Washington’s taking of the presidential oath and how America had changed since Washington had placed “his hand on the Bible.”

America had withstood many crises during our history, Reagan said, but we stood “as one today—one people under God, determined that our future shall be worthy of our

past.” It was time, he said, for “a new American emancipation—a great national drive to tear down economic barriers and liberate the spirit of enterprise in the most distressed areas of our country.” Together we could do this, Reagan said, “and do it we must, so help me God.”

Reagan would later assert: “There’s no story more heartening in our history than the progress that we’ve made toward the brotherhood of man that God intended for us” and “[t]oday, we utter no prayer more fervently than the ancient prayer for peace on Earth.”

He would close the address by stating: “We raise our voices to the God who is the Author of this most tender music [the American sound]. And may He continue to hold us close as we fill the world with our sound—in unity, affection, and love—one people under God, dedicated to the dream of freedom that He has placed in the human heart, called upon now to pass that dream on to a waiting and hopeful world. God bless you, and God bless America” (Reagan 1985).

Reagan’s successor, George H.W. Bush, would begin his Inaugural Address by asking the audience to join him in prayer as Eisenhower had done in 1953. He said his “first act as President” was to pray and to “ask you to bow your heads.” He then prayed:

“Heavenly Father, we bow our heads and thank You for Your love. Accept our thanks for the peace that yields this day and the shared faith that makes its continuance likely. Make us strong to do Your work, willing to heed and hear Your will, and write on our hearts these words: “Use power to help people.” For we are given power not to advance our own purposes, nor to make a great show in the world, nor a name. There is but one just use of power, and it is to serve people. Help us remember, Lord. Amen.”

Bush would later proclaim that “[a] President is neither prince nor pope, and I don’t seek a window on men’s souls. In fact, he said, he yearned “for a greater tolerance, and easygoingness about each other’s attitudes and way of life.” Our challenges were great, he said, “but our will is greater. And if our flaws are endless, God’s love is truly boundless.”

Bush would close the address by stating “God bless you. And God bless the United States of America” (GHW Bush 1989).

Bill Clinton was elected in 1992 and 1996. Clinton, like Carter, was a former governor from a Southern state and a Southern Baptist. And, like Carter, Clinton would use fewer examples of religious rhetoric in his Inaugural Addresses than his successor or his predecessor. In his first inaugural address, Clinton began by recounting the fact that inauguration day served as a symbol of rebirth of the American ideal of democracy. He said when the “Founders boldly declared America’s independence to the world and our purposes to the Almighty, they knew that America, to endure, would have to change; not change for change’s sake but change to preserve America’s ideals: life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness.”

Clinton would later quote from the Bible and exhort the nation to service. He said: “The Scripture says, ‘And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not’” (quoting without attribution Galatians 6:9 [KJV]). He went on to proclaim: “From this joyful mountaintop of celebration we hear a call to service in the valley. We have heard the trumpets. We have changed the guard. And now, each in our own way and with God's help, we must answer the call.” He would conclude his address by saying: “Thank you and God bless you all” (Clinton 1993).

Four years later Clinton would use religious rhetoric that was similar in frequency to his first but would differ slightly in content. Clinton had completed over one-third of his address before he mentioned the issue of race in America and its divisive effect. “Prejudice and contempt cloaked in the pretense of religious or political conviction are no different,” Clinton said, and “[o]ur rich texture of racial, religious, and political diversity will be a Godsend in the 21st century.”

Clinton pledged to help “redeem the promise of America” while acknowledging he would be working with a Republican Congress. But, he said, we should “remember the timeless wisdom of Cardinal Bernardin, when facing the end of his own life. He [Bernardin] said, ‘It is wrong to waste the precious gift of time on acrimony and division.’” Joseph Bernadin was a Catholic Cardinal. On September 9, 1996, Clinton had awarded Cardinal Bernardin the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In presenting the medal, the President cited Cardinal Bernardin’s work on behalf of racial equality and arms control.

Clinton would close his second inaugural by saying: “May God strengthen our hands for the good work ahead, and always, always bless our America” (Clinton 1997).

Following his controversial victory in 2000, George W. Bush, in his first inaugural address, delivered what Southern Baptist leader Richard Land described as the “most overtly religious speech in its tone of any inaugural address in living memory.”⁶¹ In the address Bush invoked “failures of love” to explain abuses and abandonment and not “acts of God.” He told the story of the Good Samaritan, quoted Mother Theresa and spoke of the “angel in the whirlwind” directing the storm.

⁶¹ “Top Bush Aide Assures Religious Right About White House Agenda,” *Church & State*, 54.3 (March, 2001), p. 16

Bush promised to “work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity.” He said that he knew this goal was “in our reach because we are guided by a power larger than ourselves who creates us equal in His image.” Government had a role in meeting the “great responsibilities” related to “public safety and public health...civil rights and common schools” but, he said, “...compassion is the work of a nation, not just a government.” He added, “...some needs and hurts are so deep they will only respond to a mentor’s touch or a pastor’s prayer. Church and charity, synagogue and mosque lend our communities their humanity, and they will have an honored place in our plans and in our laws. Many in our country do not know the pain of poverty, but we can listen to those who do. And I can pledge our nation to a goal: When we see that wounded traveler on the road to Jericho, we will not pass to the other side” (alluding, without specific reference, to the story of the good Samaritan found in Luke 10:30-37 [KJV]).

Later he would add: “Sometimes in life we are called to do great things. But as a saint of our times has said, every day we are called to do small things with great love” (Quoting Mother Theresa). The concluding section of the address would recount the story of a letter sent from Virginia statesman John Page⁶² to Thomas Jefferson. Two weeks after the signing of the Declaration of Independence Page has sent a letter to Jefferson containing his belief in a Providential purpose for the delegates’ action (Bobrick 1997, 202). Bush quoted Page’s letter: “We know the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Do you not think an angel rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm?”

⁶² Page was a military leader in the Revolutionary War and would later serve eight years in Congress as well as Governor of Virginia.

The work [“to make our country more just and generous, to affirm the dignity of our lives and every life”] continues, Bush said. “This story [America’s “great story of courage and...dream of dignity”] goes on. And an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm.” He concluded by saying: “God bless you all, and God bless America” (GWBush 2001).

Four years later Bush would be inaugurated for a second term. America had been rocked a little over three years earlier on 9/11 and was engaged in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Due to these events, Bush would say, we could reach only “one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world. America’s vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one,” he said. “From the day of our founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this Earth has rights and dignity and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and Earth.”

We would no longer ignore the suffering of oppressed people in the world, Bush said: “The rulers of outlaw regimes can know that we still believe as Abraham Lincoln did: ‘Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it.’”⁶³

Bush would note the religious diversity in America. The “edifice of character” found in Americans was “built in families, supported by communities with standards, and

⁶³ “This is a world of compensations; and he who would be no slave, must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves; and, under a just God, cannot long retain it.” Letter from Abraham Lincoln to Henry L. Pierce, April 6, 1859. <http://www.nps.gov/archive/liho/slavery/al14.htm>, accessed October 23, 2008.

sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people.”⁶⁴

America would be successful in the current struggles, Bush maintained, because “[w]e go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom, not because history runs on the wheels of inevitability—it is human choices that move events; not because we consider ourselves a chosen nation—God moves and chooses as He wills.”

We had confidence in our eventual success “because freedom is the permanent hope of mankind, the hunger in dark places, the longing of the soul.” There was, however, Providential control over our efforts. “History has an ebb and flow of justice,” Bush said, “but history also has a visible direction, set by liberty and the Author of Liberty.”

Bush would close his second inaugural address by stating a variation of the now common remark: “May God bless you, and may He watch over the United States of America” (GWBush 2005).

Analysis

As noted, Washington established many precedents his successors were to follow. In terms of religious rhetoric his first inaugural address was replete with references of what I have defined as general religious rhetoric. While relatively short in comparison to other inaugural addresses at 1428 words (see Chart I—Inaugural Address Word Length), the address included seven references of a religious nature. Four of these references were to an entity that Washington described as an “Almighty Being that rules over the

⁶⁴ Quoting from Lincoln’s speech before the first Republican state convention of Illinois on May 29, 1856.

universe,” “the Great Author of every public and private good,” “the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men” and “the benign parent of the Human Race.”

Washington was undoubtedly reflecting the religious tenor in the America of the late 18th century. A war had been fought against a superior opponent, an improbable independence won and a new government created that promised more freedom than could have been previously imagined. Many of the former colonists must have certainly felt this could not have been accomplished without divine intervention. Washington notes in his first inaugural address that “[e]very step” of the road that led to New York on that April day seemed “to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency” that had favored “the American people with opportunities.” The American people, Washington expressed, owed “pious gratitude” for these favors as well as “humble anticipation of . . . future blessings.”

Washington also expressed a view shared by others that adherence to religious principles would serve to insure the future of the young nation.⁶⁵ America had been blessed but the “propitious smiles of Heaven” could not be expected to continue to favor “a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained.” As noted earlier, this rhetoric might not have reflected Washington’s personal beliefs but were designed to resonate with the American public. Or, as Novak argues, it might reflect Washington’s personal religious beliefs (Novak 2006) as well as providing inspiration to the young nation.

In contrast to his first inaugural address, Washington included no religious rhetoric in his second inaugural address. Having given some thought as to whether or not

⁶⁵ As Tocqueville later observed: “The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other...” (Tocqueville 2007, 250).

he would even consent to serve a second term, Washington delivered the shortest inaugural address in history with a mere 135 words. It would certainly be difficult to argue that Washington was any more or less religious in 1793 than he was previously or that his perception of the religious tenor in America had diminished during that time. What his short address and lack of religious rhetoric probably reflects is an attitude that his second inaugural called for less ceremony, less need to recognize the “Invisible Hand” or to remind Americans of our “divine” favor. Washington’s second is the only inaugural address that does not include some form of religious rhetoric.

Use of religious rhetoric in Inaugural Addresses has increased

The first hypothesis to be tested is whether the actual use of religious rhetoric has increased since Washington. As to inaugural addresses, the analysis shows the answer is a significant “yes.”

As demonstrated in Chart II the total use of religious rhetoric in inaugural addresses shows an upward trend. Although the use of religious rhetoric fluctuates from president to president, the use of what I have coded as general, policy-related or specific religious references has increased over time.

[INSERT CHART II HERE]

Presidents employ religious rhetoric that is increasingly more Christian in content

The next hypothesis is whether religious rhetoric used in inaugural addresses has become increasingly Christian in the sense that there are specific references to the Christian religion or a verse or scripture from the Christian Bible. In addition I will look for references to hymns or other references that are generally associated with the

Christian faith or to “God,” “Christ” or “Christianity.” Based on an analysis of the rhetoric used in inaugural addresses I would assert that Presidents do employ religious rhetoric in the Inaugural Address that has become, over time, increasingly Christian in tone and content.

Recent surveys indicate that approximately 80% of Americans identify themselves as “Christian.”⁶⁶ Sixty-five percent of Americans believe that the nation’s founders intended the U.S. to be a Christian nation and 55% believe that the Constitution establishes a Christian nation, according to the “State of the First Amendment 2007” national survey conducted by the First Amendment Center.⁶⁷ We often hear references to America as a “Christian” nation. Historically scholars often point to conflicting evidence as to what this really means. In the sense that a “Christian nation” might imply a government that officially sanctions Christianity there can be little doubt that the Founders and subsequent leaders have resisted such a role for government. The use of increasingly “Christian” rhetoric might be interpreted as an attempt by presidents to blur the wall of separation delineated by the establishment clause of the First Amendment and strengthen the existing propensity for Americans to be Christian.

As the Founders met to formally make the break with Britain, a five member committee was designated to draft the document that would announce the independence of the colonies. Thomas Jefferson was appointed to this committee along with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and Robert Livingston. Jefferson was the primary author and for nearly a month worked on crafting the document that has become one of the sacred documents in America’s civil religion. Jefferson did not leave God out

⁶⁶ Pew Research Center, “Americans Struggle with Religion’s Role at Home and Abroad,” March 20, 2002.

⁶⁷ www.firstamendmentcenter.org, accessed September 24, 2007.

of the Declaration of Independence but the religion of the founding period—at least as expressed in the Declaration of Independence—was based more on a religion of reason and not revelation (Meacham 2007, 74).

In his original version, Jefferson mentioned a deity only twice—referring to “Nature’s God” and “Creator.” However during the editing process two other allusions to a deity were inserted by his colleagues. One reference noted that the delegates were “appealing to the supreme judge of the world” and the other asserted that they were acting with “firm reliance on the protection of divine providence” (Meacham 2007, 73).

After independence was won many of the same individuals gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 to replace the Articles of Confederation with a new framework for government. They debated and adopted what would ultimately be ratified as the Constitution of the United States. Jefferson, of course, took no formal role in the Constitutional Convention as he was serving as the American envoy in France at the time. The Constitution, unlike the Declaration of Independence, does not mention God nor does it contain any reference to a supreme being or other synonym for one. Subsequent proposals to amend the preamble to include specific Christian references have been unsuccessful (Meacham 2007, 129-130).

Did the Founders regard themselves as creating a Christian nation? For purposes of this research that question does not need to be answered. It is worth noting that on at least one occasion there has been an official, explicit expression of the role of Christianity in the founding. A treaty with Tripoli initiated by Washington to counter attacks on American vessels contains the following language: “...the government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion...” (Meacham 2007,

19) The treaty was completed by John Adams and ratified by the Senate in 1797. Of course, the language must be viewed in the context of a political document designed to resolve a diplomatic problem more than a theological statement. The language certainly appears to be in conflict with John Adams' remarks in his inaugural address noted earlier where he describes "Christianity" as a good foundation for public service and America as a nation of "people who profess and call themselves Christians" (Adams 1797). Of course there is clearly a difference in government and presidents being aware of and having a respect for the religion of a majority of the population and characterizing America as a "Christian nation."

As noted earlier the overall use of religious rhetoric in inaugural addresses has increased over the last 220 years. [See Chart II above]. When analyzing the content of this rhetoric it also becomes apparent that there has been a change in the nature of the rhetoric employed. References of a more general nature have actually declined. These are references to "Providence" or "a higher power" as demonstrated in some of the early illustrations above. Overall this decline in general religious rhetoric is demonstrated in Chart III below.

The trendline on Chart III shows a decrease in general religious rhetoric. Of the 34 inaugural addresses delivered beginning with Hayes (1877) through Obama's 2009 inaugural, 12 contained a single general religious reference. Ten of those addresses contained no religious reference of a general nature. The reduction in general religious rhetoric would be even more dramatic except for the three inaugural addresses delivered by Eisenhower in 1953 (8 general references), Bush⁴¹ (6 general references) and Bush 43 in 2001 (7 general references).

[INSERT CHART III HERE]

If overall usage of religious rhetoric is up and general usage is down then there is only one obvious conclusion: either religious rhetoric related to policy issues or specific religious references have increased. As noted below in Chart IV, religious rhetoric has been used infrequently in inaugural addresses to promote policy. Perhaps due to the ceremonial nature of the inaugural, presidents have shown a tendency to use more specific occasions such as the State of the Union message for policy initiatives. The slight downward tendency for presidents to use religious rhetoric to mention or promote a specific policy or program in the inaugural address is statistically insignificant. The lack of such rhetoric is most notable in the inaugurals of modern presidents. Since FDR only Nixon in his second inaugural tied a religious reference to policy when he invoked a “God-given right” of every American to full and equal opportunity that should be ensured by government.

[INSERT CHART IV HERE]

The answer then should be, and is, that overall usage of religious rhetoric has increased due to the use of more specific religious references that are Christian in nature.

As previously noted, early presidents used a variety of allusions when thanking, describing or beseeching a higher power in their inaugural addresses. For example, “Providence” was the chosen reference on seventeen occasions beginning with John Adams. The last president to use this specific language was Dwight Eisenhower in 1953 when he noted the “watchfulness of a Divine Providence.” Of the seventeen references

to Providence, fourteen were used prior to 1900.⁶⁸ Other common terms were “Almighty Being” (3), “Great Author,” “Giver of Good,” “Heaven” (7) and “Heavenly Father.” “God,” on the other hand, has been used in thirty–five inaugurals with twenty-five of those occasions coming after 1900.

The first example of what I have coded as “specific”⁶⁹ religious rhetoric in an inaugural address occurs in 1797 as John Adams assumes the presidency. As noted earlier, Adams concludes his inaugural address with a long list of characteristics that he hopes will enable him to “comply with your wishes” as president. He includes in this list “a veneration for the religion of a people who profess and call themselves Christians, and a fixed resolution to consider a decent respect for Christianity among the best recommendations for the public service” (Adams 1797).

Monroe was the first president to invoke the name of “God” in an inaugural in his second inaugural address in 1821. After Monroe the word “God” was not used in an inaugural address again until Franklin Pierce in 1853—a length of 32 years. After Pierce it became commonplace for presidents to use the word in the inaugural. From Garfield’s reference in 1881 until Barack Obama’s in 2009, every president except Theodore Roosevelt used the word “God” in their inaugural address. However, during this same period no president explicitly referred to Christianity.

John Quincy Adams would be the first to quote from the Bible in 1825. At least twelve presidents have quoted directly or alluded to passages from the Bible and nine

⁶⁸ These include John Adams (1797), Jefferson (1801 & 1805), Monroe (1817), JQ Adams (1825), Jackson (1829), van Buren (1837), Taylor (1849), Pierce (1853), Buchanan (1857), Lincoln (1865), Grant (1869 & 1873), McKinley (1897), Wilson (1917), Hoover (1929) and Eisenhower (1953). <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>, accessed October 11, 2007.

⁶⁹ **Specific:** references to the Bible, a Bible verse or chapter; or a quote from the Bible (whether specifically identified or not); referencing or quoting a religious hymn; references to “God,” “Christ,” or “Christianity.” Also references to other specific religious faiths, i.e. “Islam” or “Muslim.” See Appendix A “Coding Rules.”

were after 1900. In fact, seven of those Biblical references have occurred since Kennedy's inaugural in 1961 (Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama). The only two presidents since Kennedy not to quote or allude to the Bible were Reagan (although he does mention Washington placing his 'hand upon the Bible' when he took the oath of office) and George H.W. Bush. Bush(41) also mentions Washington and the Bible and notes he took the oath of office on the same Bible used by Washington. Bush also quotes as his "guide" the "hope of a saint." Bush states: "I take as my guide the hope of a saint: In crucial things, unity; in important things, diversity; in all things, generosity." Bush did not identify the saint he was quoting, and aides later could not. However, he appeared to be paraphrasing the motto of Richard Baxter, a 17th century Puritan dissident from the Anglican Church, which was, "In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity"⁷⁰

Other recent presidents have also quoted religious icons. In 1997, as noted, Clinton quoted Joseph Bernardin, a Catholic Cardinal whom Clinton had awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his work on behalf of racial equality and arms control. George W. Bush quoted "a saint of our times" in 2001 with the statement that "every day we are called to do small things with great love." It is not clear why he would not mention the name of that saint, Mother Theresa, specifically. The recipient of the Noble Peace Prize in 1979, Mother Theresa died in 1997. The Catholic Church is currently going through their formal process to have her recognized as a saint.

On only one occasion does a president refer to some holy text other than the Bible. In 2005, in the midst of a war with an Islamic nation, George W. Bush would

⁷⁰ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/inaug/history/stories/bush89.htm>, accessed March 14, 2007.

state: “In America’s ideal of freedom, the public interest depends on private character, on integrity and tolerance toward others and the rule of conscience in our own lives. Self-government relies, in the end, on the governing of the self. That edifice of character is built in families, supported by communities with standards, and sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people” (Bush 2005).

The trend toward using more specific religious rhetoric is displayed in Chart V below. By analyzing both the quantity and the content of those references we are able to assert that presidents have increasingly used religious rhetoric that is more specific and more Christian. As noted, references to scripture from the Bible have increased significantly. McKinley quoted from Romans, Wilson the Book of I Kings, Harding the Gospel of Matthew, FDR alluded to passages from Exodus and Matthew, Eisenhower opened his 1953 inaugural address with a prayer to “Almighty God,” Kennedy quoted from Isaiah and Romans, LBJ from II Chronicles, Nixon quoted from Malachi, Carter the Book of Micah, Clinton quoted from Galatians, Bush43 referenced the story of the Good Samaritan found in Luke and Obama referenced I Corinthians.

The most notable increase in inaugural addresses has been the use of the word “God.” Prior to 1880 the word God appeared in only five inaugural addresses: Monroe’s second, John Quincy Adams, Buchanan, Lincoln and Grant. Since 1881 the word has appeared in thirty-one inaugural addresses, including the last eighteen.

[INSERT CHART V HERE]

It might be argued that early presidents were more sensitive to the issue of religion and politics due to the unique circumstances related to the founding era and the

strong emotional ties colonists had with various religions and denominations. Certainly the earliest presidents had been involved in the events leading up to the Revolutionary War and most had been involved in drafting the Declaration, the Constitution and/or the First Amendment. Many, such as Madison and Jefferson, had been involved in defining the role of government and religion through the drafting of documents such as the Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom (1779) and Madison's Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments (1785). For these presidents the idea of separation of church and state was still very much an experiment and they would have been careful not to favor one religion over another. Later presidents were probably aware of the increasing percentage of the population that was non-Christian (primarily Jews) as immigration brought more diversity to America and might have used this specific rhetoric to appeal to the majority of Americans who were Christian as a way to signify unity and a common heritage. As noted earlier, Inaugural Addresses are largely ceremonial. In the following Chapter I will examine whether recent presidents (particularly Reagan and George W. Bush) have consistently used religious rhetoric in the State of the Union address for policy and electoral effect.

Republican presidents use religious rhetoric more than Democrats

Scholars have noted the emergence of the Christian Right as a significant force in Republican Party politics including the presidential nominating process. When Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives in 1994, close to 60% of victorious congressional candidates received support from the Christian Coalition (Edwards, 1999, Gallagher and Bull, 1996). By 2000 Christian conservatives had become "a staple of politics nearly everywhere" (Conger and Green 2002, 65).

A recent survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life finds that the Republican Party continues to hold a substantial advantage over the Democratic Party in terms of being seen as more friendly to religion. Half of Americans say the GOP is friendly to religion compared with just 30% who see the Democratic Party as friendly toward religion. A plurality (37%) says the Democratic Party is neutral to religion, while 15% see it as unfriendly to religion. However, the proportion saying the Democratic Party is unfriendly to religion has declined slightly since July 2006 when 20% expressed such an opinion (Pew 2007).

Further, Republican presidents are often associated with “conservative” or “moral” social issue positions such as abortion or same sex marriage. One might expect that Republican presidents would utilize religious rhetoric more frequently than their Democratic counterparts. Both President Reagan and President George W. Bush identified with and courted Christian conservatives. One way that Reagan and Bush could signal their support for issues supported by these groups as well as to maintain and strengthen support from them would be to increase the amount of religious rhetoric, thereby elevating the prominence of God in the public sphere (Coe and Domke 2006, 314). To examine whether Republican presidents have tended to use religious rhetoric more often than Democrats, I will analyze inaugural addresses on two levels. First, I will examine those inaugural addresses beginning with Teddy Roosevelt through George W. Bush.

The concept of the “modern presidency” is an anchoring paradigm in presidential studies today. The predominant understanding is that the presidency has undergone a fundamental transformation, which pits “premodern” and “modern” presidents on

opposite sides of a historical divide. One important developmental change has been the tendency of most twentieth-century, or modern, presidents to govern by rhetorical appeal (Shogan 2006, 23). While there is some disagreement as to when presidents began to make use of the improvements in communication and transportation technology in an effort to “go public” (Kernell 2007) or exercise the powers of the “rhetorical presidency” (Tulis 1987), Teddy Roosevelt is one of the first to make a concerted effort to speak directly to the public in a significant way to influence policy and enhance his reelection.

In April, 1903 Roosevelt embarked on “the most ambitious presidential itinerary yet undertaken” (Morris 2001, 214). During an eight week tour of the West, Roosevelt would travel some fourteen thousand miles through twenty-five states. He would visit nearly 150 towns and cities and give an estimated 200 speeches. Following this unprecedented outreach, Roosevelt would be re-elected in 1904.

Since Roosevelt’s inaugural in 1905 there have been a total of twenty-six inaugural addresses—14 by Republicans and 12 by Democrats. During this period of time Republican presidents have used religious rhetoric more than their Democratic counterparts in their inaugural addresses. Overall Republicans average 6.6 examples of religious rhetoric while Democrats average only 3.7.

In addition to the overall use of religious rhetoric the content and nature of the rhetoric also varies. Religious rhetoric in Republican inaugural addresses range from Teddy Roosevelt’s single reference in 1905 to Harding and Eisenhower each using such rhetoric twelve times. Teddy Roosevelt would make only a single reference in which he expressed gratitude to the “Giver of Good” who had blessed the American people.

Harding's address in 1921 as well as Eisenhower's first in 1953 will be discussed in more detail in the following section on pre-1973 addresses.

Republican presidents used policy-related religious rhetoric a total of seven times (or an average of .5 times per address) while there was not a single policy-related reference using religious rhetoric by a Democrat. These references in Republican addresses range from the subtle to the overt. For example, Taft (1909) stated that American policy should insure American citizens would not suffer "humiliating and degrading prohibition" against traveling in foreign countries due to their "race or religion." While use of the word "religion" might not appear to be an example of "religious rhetoric," examining the context of the word lends itself to such a definition. Taft was noting that the policy of the American government would be that any American citizen should be allowed to travel freely and not be denied entry into a foreign country because of their race or religion. This was during a time when race and religion were still controversial at home and were the basis for growing restrictions elsewhere in the world. There had been significant anti-Catholic feelings during the 19th century in America and growing tension regarding Jewish citizens overseas. In 1912 Taft would abrogate an 1832 trade treaty with Russia due to their treatment of Russian Jews and discrimination against American Jews.⁷¹ Russia had passed laws restricting Jewish ownership of land, prohibiting Jews from living in villages, and limiting the number of Jews studying in secular schools. In 1891, Jews were systemically expelled from Moscow. In 1912, a new law passed that prohibited even the grandchildren of Jews from serving as military officers, despite the large numbers of Jews and those of Jewish heritage in the military.

⁷¹ <http://ic.ucsc.edu/~rlipsch/Pol177/Ribuffo.html>, accessed July 17, 2008.

An article in *The New York Times* on May 26, 1902, detailed a meeting of the Israelite Alliance of America protesting the treatment of American Jews holding American passports that were denied entry into Russia because they were Jewish.⁷²

Harding in 1921 would proclaim America was “ready to encourage, eager to initiate, anxious to participate” in any program likely to lessen the probability of war and “promote that brotherhood of mankind which must be God’s highest conception of human relationship.” Harding would later assert his “most fervent prayer for America is for industrial peace...” (Harding 1921).

Harding’s successor, Calvin Coolidge, in 1925 would state America represented certain principles and that the “fundamental precept of liberty is toleration. “We can not,” Coolidge would add, “permit any inquisition either within or without the law or apply any religious test to the holding of office.” He would include in his concluding paragraph that the American government was “desiring the advancement of religion” and that the “legions which she sends forth are armed, not with the sword, but with the cross” cherishing “no purpose save to merit the favor of Almighty God” (Coolidge 1925).

Similarly, Herbert Hoover in 1929 would assert that the American government “must...give leadership to the realization” of the ideals and aspirations of the American people including “the growth of religious spirit and the tolerance of all faiths” (Hoover 1929).

The overall usage of religious rhetoric by Democratic and Republican presidents is displayed in Chart VIII below.

[INSERT CHART VIII HERE]

⁷² <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9C03E6DE113DEE32A25755C2A9639C946397D6CF>, accessed March 11, 2009.

The second part of the analysis of this hypothesis will focus more on contemporary inaugurals. Without question the Supreme Court's decisions regarding a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy have created considerable political controversy. Some believe it was the catalyst that brought many fundamentalist and evangelical Christians into the political arena. Political involvement by the Christian Right began earlier than the decision in *Roe*, however. Earlier decisions on school prayer [*Engel et al. v. Vitale et al.*, 370 U.S. 421, (1962)] and reading the Bible in school [*Abington School Dist. v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, (1963)] had laid the foundation for what would become a significant political movement. But it is abortion that has remained at the forefront of the political dialogue. Ongoing debate on abortion and related issues continues to be have a major role in American politics including presidential politics, state legislative proposals and nominations to the Supreme Court. For this reason I have chosen *Roe v. Wade* as the demarcation line for this analysis. I will examine separately those inaugural addresses before and after the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973.

Pre-1973

The Supreme Court's decision in the case of *Roe v. Wade* was announced on January 22, 1973, two days after Richard Nixon's second inauguration. Beginning with Teddy Roosevelt's Inaugural Address in 1905 through Nixon's second in 1973 there were a total of nine inaugural addresses delivered by Republican presidents. In terms of the total examples of religious rhetoric two addresses stand out: Warren Harding's in 1921 and Eisenhower's first in 1953.

A Baptist, Warren G. Harding from Ohio was the first sitting Senator to be elected President. A former newspaper publisher and Governor of Ohio, the President-elect rode

to the Capitol with President Wilson in the first automobile to be used in an inauguration. President Wilson had suffered a stroke in 1919 and his health prevented him from attending the inaugural ceremony on the East Portico of the Capitol. The oath of office was administered by Chief Justice Edward White using the Bible from Washington's first inauguration.

Harding delivered the first inaugural address following the conclusion of World War I. He used the occasion to note the aftermath of the war as a "great storm" with both "destruction" and "things which withstood it." As Americans, he said, we experience "regret and new hope." He goes on to note the solemn nature of the inaugural and the "great weight of responsibility" that he was about to assume and which no one could fully appreciate until they took the oath. He stated that he believed the founding fathers had "divine inspiration" and that surely "God's intent" was evidenced in the making of America—"this new-world Republic." He would later state that the world upheaval "added heavily to our tasks" but that there was "reassurance in belief in the God-given destiny of our Republic." Additionally Harding asserted that he was not alone in the assumption of this responsibility but there were "a hundred millions, with common concern and shared responsibility, answerable to God and country."

Referring to America as having "an organic law which had but one ambiguity," he stated that ambiguity was "effaced in a baptism of sacrifice and blood." Thereafter we had become an example of "great truths" to the rest of the world and had seen "civil, human and religious liberty verified and glorified."

Harding used religious rhetoric to project two policy-related proposals. He first stated that America was "ready to encourage, eager to initiate, anxious to participate in

any seemly program likely to lessen the probability of war, and promote that brotherhood of mankind which must be God's highest conception of human relationship." America, "the unshaken temple of representative democracy," must not only be an inspiration and example for the world but also an agent of "strengthening good will and promoting accord on both continents."

Later Harding would alert Americans that we must "guard against dangers from within" as fervently as from without. America recognized no favored "class ... group ... [or] section" and Harding said his most reverent "prayer for America is for industrial peace" guided by the principles of "equal opportunity."

In the last few paragraphs of his inaugural address, Harding would turn to the Bible for inspiration. Noting that "[s]ervice is the supreme commitment of life," Harding stated that he would "rejoice to acclaim the era of the Golden Rule" without referencing Matthew 7:12.⁷³ In conclusion he implored "the favor and guidance of God in his Heaven" and noted that he had taken the oath of office "on that passage of Holy Writ wherein it is asked: 'What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'"⁷⁴ (Harding 1921).

Eisenhower begins his first inaugural address with a prayer beseeching "Almighty God" to make "full and complete" the dedication of the new members of the Executive branch to the service of "the people in this throng, and their fellow citizens." He prayed for the "power to discern clearly right from wrong" and that their concern be for "all the people regardless of station, race or calling." He goes on to assert the "presence of God"

⁷³ "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matthew 7:12 (KJV).

⁷⁴ Quoting without reference Micah 6:8 (KJV).

on this day and to request “God’s guidance” to help in the search for meaning “of these times in which we live.”

Noting the change in administrations accomplished by the inauguration of a new president, Eisenhower states that the “political changes accomplished” are not a sign of turbulence or upheaval but “expresses a purpose of strengthening our dedication and devotion to the precepts of our founding documents, a conscious renewal of faith in our country and in the watchfulness of a Divine Providence.”

Eisenhower closes his first inaugural with the admonition that there is much to be accomplished in “this century of trial” and that the work should be accomplished with “bravery, with charity, and with prayer to Almighty God” (Eisenhower1953).

Beginning with Teddy Roosevelt and prior to the announcement of the Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade*, there were a total of eighteen inaugural addresses—nine were Republicans and nine were Democrats. Republicans averaged 5.8 references of religious rhetoric while Democrats averaged 3.7.

Post-1973

Since the decision in *Roe v. Wade* there have been a total of eight inaugural addresses—five by Republicans and three by Democrats (as noted previously the fourth Democratic inaugural, Obama 2009, will be discussed in the concluding chapter). In terms of their personal religious beliefs there are similarities and differences among these presidents.

Reagan’s religious background and that of Bush(43) were examined in Chapter I. Bush(41) was outwardly less immersed in religion than either his predecessor or his son.

An Episcopalian, Bush(41) would publicly mention his faith but utilized religious rhetoric less than either Reagan or Bush(43).

In his inaugural address, George H.W. Bush would, like Eisenhower, begin with a prayer—“his first act as President.” He prayed to the “Heavenly Father” and thanked Him for “Your love.” He sought strength to do “Your work” and to “heed and hear Your will.” His closing section included the assertion that “God’s love is truly boundless” (Bush 1989).

Given the limited number of inaugural addresses since 1973 the results regarding religious rhetoric may be skewed to some degree. As indicated by the following chart, since 1973 Republican presidents have used religious rhetoric an average of eight times per address while Democrats have used such rhetoric only 3.7 times. It would appear that Republican presidents do use religious rhetoric more than Democrats, especially recent Republican presidents.

The analysis of inaugural addresses shows the following: Since Teddy Roosevelt’s inaugural in 1905 Republicans have used religious rhetoric more frequently than Democrats. When broken down to examine those inaugurals before and after *Roe v. Wade*, the analysis shows that the use of religious rhetoric has increased for Republicans after *Roe* while for Democrats there has been no change. Since 1973 Republicans have used religious rhetoric at over twice the average rate than Democrats.

[INSERT CHART VII HERE]

It would appear that Republicans have used religious rhetoric to focus on social issues that appeal to one of their core constituencies, the Christian Right. The emergence of issues that are often characterized in religious undertones (school prayer, abortion,

Terri Schiavo, same sex marriage, embryonic stem cell research) have provided a platform for Republican presidents in the latter part of the 20th century to attract a certain segment of the electorate.

The disparity between Republican and Democratic use of this rhetoric appears to be diminishing (although not reflective of a change in policy differences). Barack Obama (and the other Democratic candidates for president in 2008) spoke openly about his faith, responded to issues related to his pastor and made direct appeals to religious leaders such as Rick Warren. Obama's inaugural address contained seven religious references—more than Bush's 2nd inaugural in 2005.

Obama referenced a scriptural passage familiar to many Christians when he alluded without reference to the passage from I Corinthians 13:11 that states “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (KJV). He spoke of the “God-given promise” of equality and freedom. He noted America was a “nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus and nonbelievers.” This clause is notable because it is the only reference I am aware of where a president dares to acknowledge publicly that there are “nonbelievers” among Americans.

Obama went on to state Americans had a sense of confidence in the “knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny” and had “God's grace upon us.” I will suggest in the concluding chapter that this might indicate a realization by Democrats that they can speak openly about religion with limited negative consequences while softening some of the disagreements with certain segments of the electorate.

Religious rhetoric will decrease during a president's second term

Since Washington was re-elected without opposition and delivered his second inaugural address in 1793, there have been a total of sixteen presidents who have given two (or more) inaugural addresses. Vice-presidents who were elevated to president due to the death of a president and subsequently were elected are not included for purposes of this analysis. FDR gave a total of four inaugural addresses. In this analysis I use only his first (1933) and second (1937).

Of the sixteen presidents who delivered a second inaugural address, ten reduced their use of religious rhetoric the second time around while three presidents used the same number of religious references. Of the three presidents who show increased use of religious rhetoric, one is Grover Cleveland. Cleveland, of course, is the only president to be elected, defeated and then re-elected four years later. So, even though Cleveland gave two inaugural addresses, they were separated by the inauguration and presidency of Benjamin Harrison and, thus, could be construed as two 'first' inaugurals. In Cleveland's case the increase in religious rhetoric was slight, increasing from two references in 1885 to three in 1893.

The two presidents who do show an increase in religious rhetoric in their second inaugural are Lincoln and Reagan. As noted earlier, Lincoln's second inaugural address is filled with dramatic and vivid language with a rich religious texture. The ongoing Civil War provided a backdrop for the address.

Ronald Reagan took office in 1981 during a time of considerable economic turmoil. He would use nearly half of his first inaugural to discuss economic plans and swore that the hopes and goals of Americans would be "the dreams, the hopes, and the goals of this administration, so help me God." He would later assert that he had been told

there were “tens of thousands of prayer meetings” being held on this day and that, as a “nation under God” who “God intended” to be free that he felt it would be appropriate for each Inaugural Day in the future “be declared a day of prayer” (Reagan 1981). Overall Reagan used six examples of religious rhetoric in his first inaugural address.

Reagan’s second inaugural shows an increased use of religious rhetoric as compared to the first. He opens with a “God bless you and welcome back” to Senator John Stennis. Reagan then asks for a moment of silent prayer for Representative Gillis Long who had died the night before. Reagan invokes the memory of George Washington’s inaugural and the placing of Washington’s “hand upon the Bible.”

Reagan would use some language similar to his first inaugural when he refers to the American people as “one people under God” and pledges, “so help me God,” to create a “new American emancipation” to “tear down economic barriers” in the country. Regarding opportunity “for all our citizens” Reagan would assert that America had made progress “toward the brotherhood of man that God intended for us.” Later he would declare that today “we utter no prayer more fervently than the ancient prayer for peace on Earth.”

Reagan would close his second inaugural stating “the American sound” was to “raise our voices to the God who is the Author of this most tender music.” Americans, Reagan said, were now “called upon” to pass the dream of freedom God had “placed in the human heart” to a “waiting and hopeful world” (Reagan 1985).

Reagan’s second inaugural not only showed an increase in the use of religious rhetoric but also used the rhetoric to motivate Americans to “renew our faith” to face challenges at home and around the world.

Overall use of religious rhetoric in second inaugurals as compared to the first is indicated in Chart VIII below.

[INSERT CHART VIII HERE]

Religious rhetoric will increase during a time of war

Defining a period of war for this type of study can be difficult. Many times “war” is shaded for some length of time before actual combat and may have lasting effects after combat operations diminish to a minimal amount. In addition many contemporary wars occur without a formal declaration of war by the Congress. For example, America was clearly drawn into World War II by the bombing of Pearl Harbor. But America was focused on the war in the rest of the world for years before the Japanese attack. In addition we were participating through certain policies in the war effort for our allies. Certainly the American people were being prepared for the possible advent of war. It would be difficult to argue that FDR’s rhetoric in the late 1930s up until Pearl Harbor was not dramatically influenced by war even though we were not actually involved at that point.

Similarly, the Civil War was fundamentally over by the time of Lincoln’s second inaugural but Lee would not surrender until some four weeks after Lincoln’s swearing in took place on March 4, 1865. For purposes of this study, “war” was defined as periods of both declared wars and undeclared wars. These include the War of 1812 (1812-14), the Mexican War (1846-47), the Civil War (April, 1861-1865), the Spanish American War (1898), World War I (1917-18), World War II (1941-45), the Korean War (1951-53),

Vietnam (1966-1975), Operation Desert Storm (1991) and the war in Afghanistan and Iraq (2002-09). Despite the increased religiosity associated with the era, it does not include addresses that occurred during what has been described as the Cold War.

In terms of inaugural addresses, seven fall within these dates: Madison's second in 1813, Lincoln's second in 1865, Wilson's second in 1917, FDR's fourth in 1945, Eisenhower's first in 1953⁷⁵ George W. Bush's second in 2005 and Obama's in 2009.

Examining these seven inaugural addresses indicates there was an increase in religious rhetoric during periods of war but it was very slight. As shown by the chart below, the seven addresses mentioned above contained an average of 3.9 specific references and 2.1 general references for a total average of 6 examples of religious rhetoric. This compares to the usage in periods of non-war of 1.9 specific, .5 policy related, 2.1 general and 4.5 total. The religious references during these defined periods of war is also skewed due to the inclusion of Eisenhower's 1953 address which contained one of the highest level of religious rhetoric of any inaugural address (4 specific and 8 general references). Also complicating this particular comparison is the inclusion of Bush and Obama. As noted previously there has been a tendency for later presidents to use more specific religious rhetoric.

It is interesting to note that the increase during periods of war does appear to come in the 'specific' category. While the general references remained constant (2.1 during periods of war and non-war), the specific references increased from 1.9 references during periods of non-war to 3.9 during the defined periods of war.

[INSERT CHART IX HERE]

⁷⁵ The Armistice ending major hostilities in Korea was signed July 27, 1953.

There is an increase in religious rhetoric, overall, during periods of war of approximately 30%. And, as noted, the increase in the specific religious rhetoric category is over 100%. The relatively small number of war time inaugural addresses and the inclusion of Eisenhower, Bush and Obama, combined with the difficulty in defining periods of war, make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions from this data. These results would indicate that war does, perhaps, contribute to a president's decision to use religious rhetoric during their inaugural address more than during other non-war periods. The next chapter will examine whether this is also true in the State of the Union message.

Chapter III

The State of the Union Address

*In times like these you need a Savior
In times like these you need an anchor;
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!*⁷⁶

State of the Union messages to the Congress are mandated by Article II, Section 3 of the United States Constitution which states that the President “. . . shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.” In his first inaugural address Washington noted the provisions of Article II, § 3 but declined to make specific recommendations at that time. Instead he simply called the attention of the assembled Senators and House members to the “great constitutional charter under which you are assembled” and noted that it designated “the objects to which your attention is to be given.”

Washington delivered his first regular Annual Message to a joint session of Congress in New York City in person on January 8, 1790, and would deliver his second on December 8th that same year. During the remainder of his two terms Washington established the precedent of delivering a message on an annual basis. Since Washington presidents have delivered these messages regularly at approximately one year intervals. Due to this fact the president’s message was formally known as the Annual Message from 1790 to 1934. It began to be informally called the State of the Union address from 1942 to 1946 and since 1947 has been known as the State of the Union address.

⁷⁶ *In Times Like These*, Words and Music by Ruth Caye Jones (1902-1972)

The ratification of the 20th Amendment on January 23, 1933, changed the opening of Congress from early March to early January, affecting the delivery of the Annual Message. Until 1934 the Annual Message was delivered every December. Since 1934 the Annual Message or State of the Union Address has been delivered every January or February.

Most Americans today suffer from the misconception that the State of the Union has always been an orally delivered message presented by the president to a joint session of Congress. Historically, that was not the case. Beginning with Jefferson's first State of the Union (1801) and continuing through Taft's final message (1912), the State of the Union was a written report delivered to Congress. This changed in 1913 when Wilson delivered an oral message to Congress. Wilson believed the presidency was more than an impersonal institution. He believed the presidency was dynamic, alive and personal (Tulis 1987) and the State of the Union message was one way to exhibit this vital attribute of the presidency. Wilson's well-documented health problems prevented him from delivering an oral address to Congress in 1919 and 1920, but Harding's two State of the Union messages (1921 and 1922) and Coolidge's first (1923) were also oral messages. Coolidge reverted to the earlier model and delivered a written message in 1924. His remaining State of the Union messages (1925-28) were also delivered in written form. Following Coolidge all four of Hoover's State of the Union messages (1929-32) were also written. Of the 222 annual messages, 128 have been submitted as written documents and 94 have been oral addresses.

Perhaps because he felt, like Wilson, that the presidency should be a more vital participant in governing or simply because he did not want to follow any example left to

him by Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt returned to the practice of delivering an oral message beginning with his first in 1934. Thus, FDR established the modern tradition of delivering an oral State of the Union message. With a few exceptions this trend has continued since that time. These exceptions include Truman's first (1946) and last (1953), Eisenhower's last (1961), Carter's last (1981) and Nixon's fourth (1973). In addition, Roosevelt's last (1945) and Eisenhower's fourth (1956) were technically written messages sent to Congress although they addressed the American people via radio summarizing their reports.

One notable difference in the written messages as opposed to the addresses delivered orally to the Congress is length. Of the 222 messages 91 have been oral addresses to Congress. These addresses averaged 5594 words ranging from the shortest of 1089 (Washington 1790) to the longest of 9206 (Clinton 1995). By contrast the 124 written messages delivered to Congress averaged being nearly twice as long with an average of 10,305 words.

[INSERT CHART X HERE]

Not all of the messages fit neatly into these two categories (oral vs. written). On three occasions presidents have presented written messages to Congress in multiple parts over the course of a few weeks: Taft in 1911 and 1912 and Nixon in 1973. These multiple-part submissions comprise some of the longest messages and average over 25,000 words. Also FDR in 1945 and Eisenhower in 1956 submitted written reports but broadcast remarks to the Nation later the same day summarizing the messages. Similarly

Truman in 1953 submitted a written message that was read to Congress by the clerk of the House. Although not delivered by the president, the reading of his message was broadcast internationally.

As noted, not all of the annual messages delivered by modern presidents have been oral. The three longest messages since Franklin Roosevelt revived the tradition of the oral address have all been written. These include Truman's first address in 1946 (17,256 words); Nixon's fourth in 1973 (a series of six written messages delivered to Congress between February 2nd and March 14th that contained a total of 27,175 words); and Carter's last (delivered in 1981 prior to vacating the presidency containing 33,903 words). In terms of word length, Carter's message has the distinction of being the longest State of the Union message in history.

In addition, the four most recent presidents have addressed a joint session of Congress shortly after their inaugurations but these messages are not technically considered "State of the Union" messages. These addresses were given by George H.W. Bush on "Building a Better America," 1989; Bill Clinton on the economy, 1993; George W. Bush on the economy, 2001; and Barack Obama primarily on the economy, 2009. For purposes of this research, I have included these messages since the impact of such a speech on the public and media should be the same as if the address was an official State of the Union.

As Campbell and Jamieson (1990) note, "In the aggregate . . . [State of the Union] messages are an ongoing cultural dialogue about the nature and purposes of our political system" (74). State of the Union addresses are also utilized for studies similar to this one because they occur at regular intervals, are crafted for the public as well as for Congress,

contain major policy priorities of the president, draw a considerable audience and are widely disseminated. While the State of the Union itself has become a televised event in the last half of the 20th century, in the mid-1960s the television networks also began providing the opposition party with time for a response. Senator Everett Dirksen (R-Illinois) and Rep. Gerald Ford (R-Michigan) delivered the first opposition response in 1966. By 1976 the television networks were providing a slot for the opposition party almost immediately after the State of the Union address. The addresses and responses have become part of the political dialogue and provide an opportunity for both sides to attempt to frame and influence the public agenda.

State of the Union messages contain both substance and symbolism. Substance is found both in the policy recommendations made by the president and the policy successes he emphasizes. Paul Light notes the significance of the substance contained in these documents. “The message is of primary importance to the White House staffs; it is *the* statement of legislative priorities” (Light 1999, 160). But the addresses are often more than detailed, dry policy recommendations presented in bureaucratic language. Policy proposals are often mentioned briefly with little detail. Many times the president will note that detailed proposals will be submitted or simply challenge Congress to address certain issues in a timely fashion. Many of the messages also contain symbolism often employed by speakers in effective rhetoric.

There have been a variety of studies that analyze the messages delivered through the State of the Union. These studies have ranged from a historical perspective of how State of the Union messages have evolved over time from a simple reporting document to a written summary of cabinet reports to the agenda setting document it is today (Fersh

1961). As a part of his historical study, Fersh notes a “post-Civil War trend of minimizing or excluding completely religious thanksgiving in the annual messages” (98). As we will see, many of the early messages contained statements of thanksgiving to “a gracious Providence,” “Divine Providence,” the “Supreme Ruler of Nations” and other references of a religious nature. These general pronouncements have been replaced by more specific and broader use of religious rhetoric.

Various scholars have examined the State of the Union, sometimes independently and sometimes with studies of other presidential speeches (Campbell and Jamieson 1990; Hinckley 1990; Shogan 2006). Some scholars have used the State of the Union messages to study presidential behavior (Kessel 1974, 1977) and others to look at the use of the messages as vehicles of agenda setting by the president (Light 1982). For purposes of this study the State of the Union message will be beneficial since it tends to be less ceremonial than Inaugural addresses and it is given at more frequent intervals. Additionally all presidents with the exception of William Henry Harrison (due to his untimely death) and James Garfield (due to his assassination) have delivered at least one annual message. They provide, therefore, a window to the changing view of the president as to the needs of the country and the nature of the presidency itself.

Historical Examples

Use of religious rhetoric was restrained in the annual messages initially. Washington, in his first, would pay homage to “a gracious Providence” and recount the “[n]umerous . . . providential blessings” that had provided the abundance enjoyed by the country in his third message. He chose no religious rhetoric of any sort in his second. We see the first mention of religion in a policy related matter in his third annual message

as well. In discussing the ongoing skirmishes with Native American tribes along the western frontier Washington proposed several policies designed to eliminate the need for coercion in the future so “that an intimate intercourse may succeed, calculated to advance the happiness of the Indians and to attach them firmly to the United States.” These policies would permit “[a] system corresponding with the mild principles of religion and philanthropy toward an unenlightened race of men, whose happiness materially depends on the conduct of the United States” that would be both “honorable to the national character” and “conformable to the dictates of sound policy.” Religion in a general sense would guide the policies of the United States in dealing with Native Americans.

Washington would continue this pattern of minimal religious rhetoric in subsequent messages with acknowledgements to “Divine Providence” (1792); “that Being on whose will the fate of nations depends” (1793); called attention to the “gracious indulgences of Heaven” and implored the “Supreme Ruler of Nations to spread his holy protection over these United States” (1794); expressed gratitude to the “Author of all good” with a “sincere acknowledgment to Heaven” (1795); and acknowledged the “Ruler of the Universe” with his “fervent supplications to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe and Sovereign Arbiter of Nations that His providential care may still be extended to the United States” (1796). As in so many other areas of the presidency, Washington’s rhetoric would guide future presidents especially his immediate successors.

This use of what I have defined as “general” religious rhetoric⁷⁷, references without a specific reference to a particular religious foundation such as the Bible, would continue in future annual messages. Why would presidents use rhetoric of a general

⁷⁷ “General”—references to “Providence,” “a higher power” or other similar language without a specific reference to a particular religious foundation or source (Bible, scripture, human, etc.) See Appendix A.

nature as opposed to specific references to the Bible, a Christian religion or other specific language? Perhaps it was an attempt to appeal to a broader cross-section of the population. Perhaps it was to walk the fine line of what they perceived as the separation of church and state. As this study demonstrates, this reluctance to use specific religious rhetoric appears to have diminished over time.

In his first Annual Message (1797), John Adams would refer to our “religious liberty” and assert that it was his “determination to support . . . our moral and religious principles” from attack. Utilizing language similar to that employed by Washington, Adams would give thanks to a “beneficent Providence” and a “Divine Providence.”

In 1798 Adams, whose own family had narrowly escaped tragedy due to an outbreak of smallpox (McCullough 2001, 142-144), would note the “dispensations of Divine Providence” in dealing with the “destructive pestilence” experienced by many American cities. He called for Congress to consider establishing “regulations in aid of the health laws” of the states. Earlier that year Adams had established the United States Public Health Service as a loose system of hospitals, mostly in port cities, to deal with the problem of contagious diseases afflicting American sailors.

The following year Adams would use the Annual Message to give thanks for the “abundance” and “prosperity” and the “advantages, civil and religious” secured under the American “frame of government” to a “benevolent Deity” and “His providence.”

In his final Annual Message (1800) Adams marks the occasion of delivering the first Annual Message in the new capitol building, referring to it as “this solemn temple,” by imploring the blessings of “the Supreme Ruler of the Universe.” He expressed the

hope that in the new capitol city “and throughout our country...simple manners, pure morals and true religion could flourish forever.”

While John Adams would emulate Washington’s general pattern in both occurrence and type of religious rhetoric employed in the Annual Message, his successor would reduce the frequency of such rhetoric.

Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson’s religious beliefs have been examined by scholars numerous times (Gould 1933, Foote 1960, Gaustad 1996, Braden 2006 among others). While there is neither the time nor the need to scrutinize Jefferson’s personal beliefs in detail, a few comments are appropriate. Jefferson obviously gave matters of religion a great deal of thought. His views on religious freedom and his letters to family members and others describing various religious viewpoints are well known. Gaustad has described Jefferson as “the most self-consciously theological of all American Presidents (Gaustad xiii).

But Jefferson also believed religion was a very private matter and rarely discussed it in public and then only in “reasonable company” (Malone 490). He felt proclamations proclaiming a day of prayer and thanksgiving were inappropriate and refused to issue them unlike his predecessors and successors. He rejected Calvin’s God, “whom he regarded as cruel” (Malone 491), as false and instead believed that God was a benevolent creator. Jefferson did not need revelation to understand the evidence of a designing mind and guiding hand—it was everywhere and indisputable. As a part of his contemplation on religious matters, Jefferson compiled his own version of the gospels: “*The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*” in which he carefully deleted any passages that described miracles. Whether anyone else saw the “Jefferson Bible” until after Jefferson’s death is

unclear (Malone 491). And even though many of his political opponents would label Jefferson an atheist “they could not have been further off the mark” (Gaustad 38).

Although his written response to a congratulatory letter from the Danbury Baptist Association is often cited as justification for a strict separation of church and state, as president Jefferson allowed public buildings including the House of Representatives chamber to be used for religious services and Jefferson often attended those services. He permitted the Marine Band to participate in House Church services and personally gave financial support to several local churches (Hutson 1998).

What is certain is that Jefferson’s religion, or lack of it, would emerge as a central issue in the election of 1800. While praised by some for his strong advocacy for a separation of church and state, Jefferson was vilified by many ministers. David Osgood, the Congregationalist minister in Medford, Massachusetts, said that when the people chose Jefferson as their president “they had sinned against Heaven in a grievous and aggravated manner” (Gaustad 108). The controversial election of 1800 produced what was probably religion’s greatest visibility in a presidential race until the controversy over Alfred E. Smith’s Catholicism in 1928.

Jefferson would use minimal religious rhetoric in his eight annual messages to Congress. As noted earlier, all of Jefferson’s annual messages were written reports sent to Congress. This trend of written messages would continue until Wilson in 1913.

Jefferson used only a total of seven religious references in his eight annual messages. In his first, (1801), he gave “thanks to the beneficent Being” that had brought an end to the hostilities between France and England and gave thanks to “Him” for preserving the peace of the United States. In his second (1802) he gave thanks to “that

Being from whose favor” had provided so much from “His bounty” and the “smiles of Providence.” He further noted America was “still blessed” with many things including “religion at home.”

In his third annual message (1803), Jefferson expressed that Americans should “bow with gratitude to that kind Providence” that had kept us out of the hostilities in Europe. He would use no religious rhetoric in his fourth, sixth or seventh annual messages.

In his fifth message Jefferson expressed thanks to “Providence in His goodness” for an early termination and smaller number of victims from that “fatal fever” that had gripped parts of the country. Finally, in his eighth annual message, Jefferson would express optimism “Heaven” had “prosperity and happiness” in store for America. While Jefferson used religious rhetoric less frequently than his predecessors four other presidents would use even less.

In terms of content, Madison would follow the general trend of his predecessors and use general rhetoric expressing thanks to “Divine Providence” and the “blessing of Heaven.” Madison also, in his annual message of 1812, stated that “The appeal [for war against Great Britain] was accordingly made, in a just cause, to the Just and All-powerful Being who holds in His hand the chain of events and the destiny of nations.” He would go on to conclude that “... we prosecute the war...until peace be so obtained and as the only means under the Divine blessing of speedily obtaining it.”⁷⁸ Overall Madison would refer most often to a “Divine Providence” or a “kind” or “superintending Providence” in making references of this nature.

⁷⁸ See discussion related to use of religious rhetoric in time of war following including Chart XX.

While Madison would use religious rhetoric in his annual message almost twice as often as Jefferson (13 references to 7), Monroe would return to a frequency pattern similar to Jefferson (8 references in 8 messages). Monroe did, however, use a wider variety of terms in his references to a Higher Being. He acknowledged an “Omnipotent Being” in 1817; “Providence” in 1818; the “Supreme Author of All Good” in 1820; an “Almighty Being” in 1821; and the “Supreme Ruler of the Universe” in 1824. Monroe’s 1824 annual message would also mark the first time a president used the word “God” in an Annual Message when he acknowledged we owed thanks to “Almighty God” for His blessings.

From John Quincy Adams forward we see a pattern of increased religious rhetoric in most annual messages. Perhaps this increase was due to the religious fervor that was prevalent in the United States during the 1820s and 1830s often referred to as the Second Great Awakening. Numerous charismatic ministers flourished during the era including Charles Grandison Finney, Lyman Beecher and Barton Stone.

Some scholars have suggested the impetus for the movement may have been evangelical opposition to the deism associated with the French Revolution. Finney and others led revivals throughout the United States particularly in western New York, Tennessee and Cane Ridge, Kentucky. These revivals attracted huge crowds and spiked an increase in church membership. Politicians, including presidents, would certainly have noticed.

With few exceptions, this trend for increased usage of religious rhetoric would continue until there was a noticeable reduction in the rhetoric of Taft and Wilson. In his annual messages from 1909 to 1912 Taft would be the only president to fail to use a

single religious reference in at least one annual message. Taft employed no such language in his four messages. Possible explanations for the absence of religious rhetoric in the messages of Taft will be explored later in this chapter.

[INSERT CHART XI HERE]

John Quincy Adams would also be the first president to use language referencing “Christians” or “Christianity” in an annual message. In his first annual message (1825), Adams noted the current era marked a rare period in history when “the general condition of Christian nations” was “marked so extensively by peace and prosperity.” He would later note the ongoing hostilities between Greece and Turkey and commend the “heroic struggles of the Greeks themselves, in which our warmest sympathies as free men and Christians have been engaged...” Adams would again reference Christianity in his 1828 address when discussing actions regarding Native Americans: “They were, moreover, considered as savages, whom it was our policy and our duty to use our influence in converting to Christianity and in bringing within the pale of civilization.” Later he would state that “...in appropriating to ourselves their hunting grounds we have brought upon ourselves the obligation of providing them with subsistence; and when we have had the rare good fortune of teaching them the arts of civilization and the doctrines of Christianity we have unexpectedly found them forming in the midst of ourselves communities claiming to be independent of ours and rivals of sovereignty within the territories of the members of our Union.”

In his 1825 message Adams would use a total of eight religious references—more than twice the amount used in a single message by any previous president. Most were allusions to a higher power similar to other presidents. Adams would express gratitude to the “Omnipotent Disposer of All Good;” the “Author of Our Existence;” “Creator;” “Providence;” and “He who searches the hearts of the children.”

Andrew Jackson’s annual messages continued the trend of increased religious rhetoric. His 1829 address also became the first annual message to exceed 10,000 words in length. That record would not last long, however, with his 1830 message totaling over 15,000 words.

In his first annual message in 1829 Jackson would make four references to a Supreme Being—twice he referred to “God” and “Almighty God” and twice to “Providence” and “benign Providence.” In his 1830 message Jackson observed a desire of the United States to “cultivate the most liberal and friendly relations with all” and that we were “...ever ready to do unto them as we would wish to be done by...” Although many religions include some form of reciprocity, Jackson was probably alluding to “The Golden Rule” as described in the Bible: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets” in Matthew 7:12 (KJV) and “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” in Luke 6:31 (KJV).

Jackson in 1831 would use nine religious references mostly in general references to “Providence;” that “beneficent Being;” and the “Power which superintends all governments.” These nine references were the most of any president up until that time

and would remain the most until Grant's 1875 message. Following his 1831 message Jackson would return to the trend of limited religious references.

Martin Van Buren (1837-1840) would likewise use limited religious rhetoric with only seven references in his four messages. Most of these references were the same general rhetoric associated with previous presidents. He made reference "to the Giver of All Good" and "His benign protection" (1837); "Providence" (1838); the "Author of All Good" and "Providence" (1839) and the "Supreme Being" (1840). To stress the importance of trade policy, Van Buren spoke of his obligation "to maintain with religious exactness the cardinal principles that govern our intercourse with other nations" (1839).

John Tyler became the first vice-president to be elevated to the presidency due to the death of his predecessor. Tyler had served in the House of Representatives as a Democratic Republican from the Commonwealth of Virginia from 1816 to 1821. He returned to Virginia where he served as Governor and was later elected to the United States Senate as a Jacksonian but would later oppose Jackson. Tyler joined the states' rights Southerners in Congress who formed the Whig Party and was nominated as the Whigs' vice-presidential candidate in 1840 on the ticket with William Henry Harrison.

After Harrison's death only thirty-two days after assuming the presidency, Tyler was sworn in as president on April 6, 1841. As noted in the previous chapter, Tyler did not have a formal inaugural ceremony but did give an address upon accepting the office of president. Similar in many respects to the inaugural addresses of the time, Tyler would use three examples of religious rhetoric in that address. He referred to "an all-wise Providence;" "the all wise and all powerful Being who made me;" and placed his confidence in "an ever watchful and overruling Providence."

Tyler would follow this general pattern in his subsequent annual messages. In 1841 he called for renewed “thanks” and “devotion” to “our Heavenly Parent” and reminded Congress that America should “ever remember our dependence” on the mercy of “Divine Providence.”

In 1842 Tyler would communicate concerns over a possible war with Great Britain stating that it was “of the deepest interest” not only for America “but to the civilized world.” A war between the United States and Great Britain would, he asserted, be impossible “without endangering the peace of Christendom.” He would also phrase our policy regarding Native American tribes in religious terms and noted that the “schoolmaster and the missionary are found side by side.” Education and religion were seen as the cornerstones of sound policy that would reduce hostilities and permit tribes to become self-sufficient and prosperous. In this message Tyler would also utilize language alluding to “the Great Creator of All Things;” “Providence;” and “that great Being who made us and who preserves us as a nation” (1842).

Tyler would use a total of ten religious references in his last two annual messages. With the exception of referring to “Christendom” again in 1844 the remaining nine references were general in nature with allusions to “Supreme Being;” “Providence;” “Creator of the Universe;” “Divine Providence” and “an overruling Providence” (1843). The following year he would reference the “Supreme Ruler of the Universe;” referenced a “superintending Providence” and “the Father of the Universe” (1844).

As president, Tyler soon clashed with Henry Clay and other Whigs on issues such as the effort to establish a national bank. As a result Tyler was expelled from the Whig Party. All of his cabinet resigned except Daniel Webster, the Secretary of State. A year

later when Tyler vetoed a tariff bill, the first impeachment resolution against a president was introduced in the House of Representatives. A committee headed by Representative John Quincy Adams reported that the President had misused the veto power, but the resolution failed. Neither the Democrats nor the Whigs would nominate Tyler in 1844. He initially ran for re-election on a third party ticket but was convinced by Andrew Jackson that his candidacy would insure the election of Clay, the Whig candidate. Tyler withdrew from the race and James K. Polk was elected. Following his term, Tyler would return to Virginia. When the first southern states seceded in 1861, Tyler led a compromise movement. When this effort failed he worked to create the Southern Confederacy. In 1861 he was elected a member of the Confederate House of Representatives. Tyler died in 1862 just a few days before the Confederate House was to meet.

Polk, Taylor and Fillmore would follow this pattern of religious rhetoric in their annual messages. Polk would use a total of twelve references in his four messages. All but one were general references similar to those used by other presidents including “Divine Providence” and “Supreme Ruler of the Universe” (1845); “Giver of All Good” (1846); “An all wise Creator,” “Providence” and “Almighty Ruler of the Universe” (1847); and “Sovereign Arbiter of All Human Events” and “Almighty” (1848). His one example of specific reference came in 1848 when he quoted Andrew Jackson’s 1829 annual message:

“I now commend you, fellow citizens, to the guidance of Almighty God, with a full reliance on His merciful providence for the maintenance of our free institutions, and with an earnest supplication that what ever errors it may be my lot to commit in discharging the arduous duties which

have devolved on me will find a remedy in the harmony and wisdom of your counsels.”

Polk would also deliver the longest annual message to date in 1848. His fourth annual message was 21,334 words in length and his four messages averaged 18,036 words.

Zachary Taylor in his only annual message and Millard Fillmore in his three would use similar language. Taylor referred to “a kind Providence;” “the destroying angel” which had visited “portions of our territory with the ravages of a dreadful pestilence;” and “the Almighty” who had restored “the inestimable blessing of general health to a people who have acknowledged His power, deprecated His wrath, and implored His merciful protection.” He referenced “Him who rules the destinies of nations” and “that overruling Providence which has so long and so kindly guarded our liberties and institutions...” (1849). Taylor died on July 9, 1850 in Washington D.C. He became ill after participating in ceremonies at the Washington Monument on a blistering July 4th. He died five days later. He was the second president to die in office.

Fillmore used similar language referring to “Divine Providence;” and “the Great Ruler of Nations” (1850); “a beneficent Providence (1851); “an all-merciful Providence;” and acknowledged that America owed her blessings “under Heaven” to the “Men of the Revolution” and that we had a “sacred duty to transmit [those blessings] in all their integrity to our children” (1852).

It is in the annual messages of Franklin Pierce that we see the first significant increase in language that is more specific in content yet remained fairly consistent in frequency.

Franklin Pierce

Franklin Pierce was born in Hillsborough, New Hampshire, in 1804. He attended Bowdoin College, studied law then entered politics. At 24 he was elected to the New Hampshire legislature; two years later he became its Speaker. During the 1830's he went to Washington, first as a Representative and then as a Senator. In 1834 he married Jane Appleton. She did not share his love of politics and persuaded him retire from the Senate in 1842. At the time Pierce was the youngest Senator.

Jane Pierce was a deeply religious woman and the daughter of a Congregationalist minister. Her religious beliefs permeated almost every aspect of the family's life. No meal took place without grace. Her children went to church every single morning. By 1842 she had lost two children, one at birth and four-year-old Frank, Jr. to typhus. Her third child, Benny, became the center of her life. Probably due to her urging, Pierce declined appointments to the Senate and Attorney General. He would serve with some distinction in the Mexican-American War (Taylor 1955).

At the 1852 Democratic Convention several well-known candidates (including James Buchanan and Stephen Douglas) failed to gain sufficient support to secure the nomination. Finally, on the 35th ballot, Pierce's name was entered in nomination. He would secure the nomination on the 48th ballot and go on to soundly defeat Whig candidate General Winfield Scott in the general election. Ironically, Scott had been Pierce's commanding officer during the Mexican-American War.

In January, 1853, approximately two months before his inaugural, Pierce and his family were returning from a trip to Boston. The train carrying the president-elect and his family derailed and their eleven-year-old son, Benny, was decapitated in the accident

as his parents watched. This tragic incident had dramatic effects on both the president-elect and Mrs. Pierce. She would not recover and most of her remaining years were spent in isolation and despair. She died on December 2, 1863 (Taylor, 348).

Following this tragedy, Jane Pierce did not accompany her husband to Washington for the inaugural and there was no inaugural ball. Pierce, an Episcopalian, chose to 'affirm' his Constitutional oath of office as president instead of 'swear' due to religious considerations. He is the only president to avail himself of this Constitutional option.

Tragedy was to also touch Pierce's administration. His vice-president, William Rufus King, died on April 18, 1853, barely six weeks after Pierce's inauguration.

In his first annual message (1853) Pierce would give thanks to "God" and refer to the United States as a power of "Christendom." He would repeat similar language in 1854 when he again gave thanks to "the God of grace and providence" and noted that "whatever interrupts the peace or checks the prosperity of any part of Christendom tends" to affect the United States. He would refer again to "Almighty God" in the 1854 message and again in 1855. His four specific⁷⁹ religious references in 1854 were more than the references used by any of his predecessors.

Denied renomination by his party, Pierce would return to New Hampshire. Jane never recovered from the death of Benny and died December 2, 1863. Pierce would die October 8, 1869 at the age of 64.

⁷⁹ Specific: references to the Bible, a Bible verse or chapter; or a quote from the Bible (whether specifically identified or not); referencing or quoting a religious hymn; references to "God," "Christ" or "Christianity." Also references to other specific religious faiths, i.e. "Islam" or "Muslim."

The Democrats nominated James Buchanan in 1856 instead of Franklin Pierce. Buchanan had served both in the House and the Senate. He served as Polk's Secretary of State and was the Minister to Great Britain under Pierce. Buchanan would win the election defeating both John Fremont and former president Millard Fillmore.

Religion and specifically the Mormon religion would be a prominent feature of Buchanan's first annual message (1857). After giving thanks to "Almighty God" for the "numerous benefits He has bestowed" on the United States, Buchanan would discuss a number of issues including the new Territory of Utah. Recounting how Brigham Young had been appointed Territorial Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Territory, Buchanan also noted that Young served "at the same time the head of the church called the Latter-day Saints, and professes to govern its members and dispose of their property by direct inspiration and authority from the Almighty. His power has been, therefore, absolute over both church and state." Buchanan would refer to Young as "despotic" and that the people of Utah obeyed his commands as if they were "direct revelations from Heaven."

Buchanan believed it had become necessary to replace Young as Territorial Governor and to put down what Buchanan called the "first rebellion which has existed in our Territories." It was not merely the Mormon religion that created these difficulties. Buchanan would state: "With the religious opinions of the Mormons, as long as they remained mere opinions, however deplorable in themselves and revolting to the moral and religious sentiments of all Christendom, I had no right to interfere." But when these opinions manifested themselves in "actions" contrary to the Constitution and Young stated he would maintain control by force if necessary, Buchanan asserted it was

necessary to send military force to restore order. He recommended that Congress raise four additional regiments for this purpose. Buchanan ultimately decided to replace Young as Territorial Governor with Alfred Cumming. He ordered 1,500 troops to accompany Cumming west and to enforce federal rule in Utah. Young would ultimately accept the new governor and accept Buchanan's offer of a pardon to Utah citizens who would submit to federal law. Wilford Woodruff, the LDS Church's fourth president, issued a formal renunciation of plural marriage in 1890 (Roberts 2008, 44-51). This is by no means meant to be a comprehensive examination of the controversies surrounding the Mormon religion and the settlement of Utah. It is intended to merely note the controversy and put in context some of the language employed by presidents during this period.

Buchanan would not only utilize various allusions to a higher power ("Almighty Providence" in 1858; "Almighty Power" in 1859; "Creator" in 1860) he would also make specific references to God and Christianity. He would also quote from the Bible. In his 1859 message he paraphrased a verse from the Book of Ecclesiastes. Expressing his hope that the events at Harper's Ferry would cause the people to "pause and reflect upon the possible peril to their cherished institutions," Buchanan expressed that he believed the people would "...resolve that the Constitution and the Union shall not be endangered by rash counsels, knowing that should 'the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken at the fountain' human power could never reunite the scattered and hostile fragments." Buchanan was paraphrasing without attribution Ecclesiastes 12:6. The complete verse reads: "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern." (KJV)

Buchanan would also quote the Bible in 1860. In recounting that "...it is a remarkable fact in our history that...no single act has ever passed Congress... impairing in the slightest degree the rights of the South to their property in slaves..." Buchanan would add: "Surely under these circumstances we ought to be restrained from present action by the precept of Him who spake as man never spoke, that 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' The day of evil may never come unless we shall rashly bring it upon ourselves." Buchanan was quoting without attribution Matthew 6:34: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (KJV).

Buchanan would also use other specific religious references. Referring to slaves in his 1859 message, Buchanan stated that "The light and the blessings of Christianity have been extended to them, and both their moral and physical has been greatly improved." But Buchanan opposed a reopening of the slave trade stating that "...we are obliged as a Christian and Moral nation" to consider the effect upon Africa and that it would "convert the whole slave coast into a perfect pandemonium, for which this country would be held responsible in the eyes both of God and man." Buchanan believed the answer was in the ending of the slave trade everywhere. This would reduce war among the African tribes and permit a gradual improvement in the African condition. "In this manner," he said, "Christianity and civilization may gradually penetrate the existing gloom" [in Africa].

In 1860 Buchanan would refer to "God" more than any other allusion to a deity. He would state that "his prayer to God" was that He would preserve the Constitution and the Union; that the slave states were "responsible before God and the world for the

slavery existing among them;” and that the president “...is bound by solemn oath, before God and the country, ‘to take care that the laws be faithfully executed,’ and from this obligation he can not be absolved by any human power.”

Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln knew from long experience that delivering a speech to a live audience is very different from addressing readers through a written message. A speaker delivering an address to a live audience can employ a variety of techniques to engage the listeners. He can use body language, hand gestures, facial expressions, volume and tone of voice, dramatic pauses and mere presence to make a greater impact or emphasize certain segments of his speech. Because he receives immediate reaction from the spectators he can adjust his delivery to take immediate advantage of their feedback. A written message provides no such opportunities and the writer must rely on other devices to provide the most dramatic impact (Wilson 14). Indeed, we see a difference in the amount of religious rhetoric contained in addresses delivered orally and those that were written messages. Overall there have been 128 annual messages that were written. These contained an average of 2.3 examples of what I have defined as religious rhetoric. There have been 94 oral addresses. These contain an average of 3.2 examples of religious rhetoric.

Lincoln employed these varying techniques in several of his well-known speeches and would alter the written version from that which was actually spoken. For example, his farewell address delivered to well-wishers at the train station of Springfield as he commenced his journey to Washington to assume the presidency differed from the

written version. It appears that the written version was actually written by Lincoln on the train after having delivered the extemporaneous remarks at the station (Wilson 13).

Annual presidential messages to Congress before Lincoln had not been known for their “literary or rhetorical style” (White 171). While the later introduction of the press conference would allow presidents the opportunity to influence public opinion, Lincoln used his annual messages as an occasion to speak to the American people. Lincoln was certainly aware of the possibilities those occasions presented a president. Speaking at a Republican banquet in Chicago on December 10, 1856, Lincoln said: “Our government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion can change the government...” (Wilson 145). Lincoln came to see opinion forming as a primary presidential task. Because of the turbulent time in which he served, the tragic ending to his presidency and the eloquence of his words, the inaugural addresses, annual messages and other speeches of Lincoln are among the most revered and remembered among presidential rhetoric.

Lincoln was not ‘religious’ in the conventional sense. He did not belong to a church or subscribe to a recognized religious creed. In an interview given to Lincoln’s former law partner William Herndon (who became a Lincoln historian and biographer), Mary Lincoln stated “Mr. Lincoln had no hope and no faith in the usual acceptation of those words: he never joined a Church.” However, Mrs. Lincoln and Herndon both believed that Lincoln was “a religious man always.” Mrs. Lincoln said that she detected an awakened interest in religion “when Willie died [February, 1862]—never before.” She went on to add: “He felt religious More than Ever about the time he went to

Gettysburg; he was not a technical Christian; he read the Bible a good deal about 1864.” (Wilson 251-252).

Lincoln, as we have seen in Chapter II, used significant religious rhetoric in his inaugural addresses—especially the Second. He also employed religious rhetoric in his annual messages to Congress and other speeches/writings as well. His first annual message (1861) was fairly typical in terms of religious rhetoric. He gave “gratitude to God” for “unusual good health and most abundant harvests” during the “unprecedented political troubles.” Lincoln would conclude that we must proceed with the “great task which events have devolved upon us” with a reliance “on Providence.”

In 1862 Lincoln became convinced that he should emancipate the slaves in Confederate territories. Between the preliminary and final drafts of the Emancipation Proclamation Lincoln wrote his second annual message to Congress. It would be delivered in December, 1862. It rose, as one scholar said, to the zenith of his presidential eloquence (Wilson 171). In the opening paragraph of the message Lincoln refers to God, “the Almighty.” For Lincoln this language was not gratuitous: God was the source of peace. Until He decided to bless us with peace “*we can but press on, guided by the best light He gives us, trusting that in His own good time and wise way all will yet be well.*”

A significant portion of the message followed the traditional form of previous annual messages. It included references to a long list of subjects including foreign relations. But Lincoln also utilized the message in an attempt to influence public opinion. He knew, of course, that the message would be reprinted in numerous newspapers and widely read. After reminding Congress of his preliminary emancipation proclamation of September 22, he called their attention to the issue of compensated emancipation. He

delivered his argument, not in a studied, rational legal argument but in a geographical reference with a political conclusion. He notes that a nation consists of “its territory, its people and its laws.” But, Lincoln observes, “The Territory is the only part which is of certain durability.” His point that people and laws change but the land remained was underscored by a quotation without attribution from Ecclesiastes 1:4: “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever” (KJV).

If Lincoln had evoked symbols of the past in his inaugural address in making his appeal for the preservation of the Union, the 1862 annual message was an appeal to the future. It would be the “latest generation,” and the distant future that would judge the actions of Lincoln, the Congress and America. He said:

Fellow-citizens, we can not escape history. We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We, even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave we assure freedom to the free--honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just--a way which if followed the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless.

The Annual Message of 1862 has been called ‘Lincoln’s finest message to Congress.’ At least one scholar when asked to choose the work that most embodied Lincoln’s ‘rhetorical leadership,’ selected this message (Wilson 189).

Lincoln’s last two annual messages were fairly restrained in their use of religious rhetoric. In his third (1863), he would again give “renewed and profoundest gratitude to God.” Regarding Indian policy he would state: “Sound policy and our imperative duty to

these wards of the Government demand our anxious and constant attention to their material well-being, to their progress in the arts of civilization, and, above all, to that moral training which under the blessing of Divine Providence will confer upon them the elevated and sanctifying influences, the hopes and consolations, of the Christian faith.”

In his fourth and last annual message (1864) Lincoln would express “our profoundest gratitude to Almighty God” for “the blessings of health and abundant harvests.” Regarding immigration policy Lincoln would note that he regarded “our immigrants as one of the principal replenishing streams which are appointed by Providence to repair the ravages of internal war and its wastes of national strength and health.”

Following Lincoln’s assassination Andrew Johnson became president. Johnson would soon find himself in conflict with the Congress, impeached and only one vote short of being removed from the presidency. Johnson was not afraid to use rhetoric to assail his enemies. Indeed his rhetoric served as one of the articles of impeachment adopted by the House of Representatives. Article X of the Impeachment Resolution alleged that Johnson had used “utterances, declarations, threats and harangues” that were “peculiarly indecent and unbecoming in the Chief magistrate of the United States” and that Johnson had “brought the high office of the President of the United States into contempt, ridicule and disgrace...and was then and there guilty of a high misdemeanor in office.” These “utterances” included accusing the Congress of attempting to prevent the success of reconstruction and an assertion it [Congress] was “trying to break up the

Government.” He had also accused “the Radical Congress” of being the cause of a riot in New Orleans.⁸⁰

In his four State of the Union messages Johnson would revert to a religious rhetoric reminiscent of his predecessors. He noted the “hand of Divine Providence” and the “Invisible Hand” that had led the American people and preserved the Republic (1865). In 1866 he would note an “all-wise and merciful Providence” had “abated the pestilence which visited our shores” and would call upon an “all-wise Providence” in 1868 to guide them as they sought to “strengthen and preserve the Federal Union.”

On two occasions Johnson would use more specific religious rhetoric. In 1865 he would state that his “first duty” was to “express gratitude to God” for the “preservation of the United States.” In 1867, stating that he believed the United States must be cautious in dealing with the Southern states and not punish all of the inhabitants for the acts of a few, Johnson would argue that “[i]ndiscriminate vengeance upon...whole communities, for offense committed by a portion of them against the governments to which they owed obedience was common in the barbarous ages of the world; but Christianity and civilization have made such progress that recourse to a punishment so cruel and unjust would meet with the condemnation of all unprejudiced and right-minded men.”

Johnson was followed in the presidency by the Civil War hero, Ulysses S. Grant. Grant would serve two full terms and deliver 8 messages averaging just over 9000 words. His use of religious rhetoric ranged from none on two occasions (1874 and 1876) to the message that contained the highest of any president up until that time. His use of ten references would remain the highest for any message until FDR in 1939.

⁸⁰ <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwgcg-imp.html>, accessed March 11, 2008.

While Grant's references to a deity were fairly standard, he also used more specific Christian references. He refers to a "Giver of All Good"—in 1869 and 1872—"a kind Providence" (1870) and "a wise Providence" (1871). Many of the religious references employed by Grant were related to federal policy toward Indian tribes. In 1869 he called for Indians to be placed "on large reservations" and given "absolute protection." Westward expansion and increased population were placing the tribes into direct contact with settlers and resulted in harm to both parties. Grant would warn that a "...system which looks to the extinction of a race is too horrible for a nation to adopt without entailing upon itself the wrath of all Christendom and engendering in the citizen a disregard for human life and the rights of others, dangerous to society." He would subsequently call upon missionaries to work with tribes to "Christianize and civilize the Indian" (1870). He would commend "the various societies of Christians" who had been entrusted with the "Indian peace policy" and noted in 1871 that the success of the policy called for "liberal appropriations" to carry out the policy "not only because it is humane, Christian like, and economical, but because it is right."

Grant would address other policy issues with religious rhetoric including polygamy (1871 and 1875), slavery (1873), education (1875) and tax policy (1875). As to polygamy Grant would note that it was not "the religion of the self-styled Saints" that was the problem since they "will be protected in the worship of God according to the dictates of their consciences" but it was "their practices." Grant stated that they could not "be permitted to violate the laws under the cloak of religion" (1871). He would add in 1875 that polygamy was "a crime against decency and morality" and should be punished "in a free, enlightened, and Christian country."

Grant also took up the subject of education in 1875 when he proposed a constitutional amendment that would make it the duty of each of the States to “establish and forever maintain free public schools” that would prohibit the teaching of “religious, atheistic, or pagan tenets.” He also suggested prohibiting the use of any school funds or school taxes “for the benefit or in aid, directly or indirectly, of any religious sect or denomination.” This was clearly anti-Catholic and a reaction to the widespread establishment of parochial schools by the Catholic Church.

Grant was also troubled by the tax-free status of church property. In his 1875 message Grant stated that the accumulation of vast amounts of untaxed church property was “an evil that, if permitted to continue, will probably lead to great trouble in our land.” Grant proposed taxing all property equally with the exception of “the last resting place of the dead and possibly, with proper restrictions, church edifices.”

This assertion recognized a belief held by many that tax exemptions, exclusions and deductions were a form of subsidy to religious institutions and activities from the public treasury and violated the First Amendment establishment clause.

Grant went on to say that religious property, “receiving all the protection and benefits of Government without bearing its proportion of the burdens and expenses of the same, will not be looked upon acquiescently by those who have to pay the taxes.” America was expanding rapidly and real state values were increasing. Grant said there was “scarcely a limit to the wealth that may be acquired by corporations, religious or otherwise, if allowed to retain real estate without taxation. The contemplation of so vast a property as here alluded to, without taxation, may lead to sequestration, without constitutional authority and through blood.”

Grant's statement represents a classic articulation of the notion that tax exemptions for churches constitute a public subsidy of religion, which enables religious institutions to acquire real estate they otherwise could not afford.

The tax exemptions Grant was objecting to were exemptions from local and state property taxes which would appear to be an unusual focus for presidential attention. Arguably, Grant's statement articulated a nativist subtext, a warning against the growing power and property ownership of the Catholic Church.⁸¹ Grant was certainly not immune from nativist sentiments and actions directed at groups with a religious base.

In 1862, in the heat of the Civil War, then General Ulysses S. Grant initiated what has been termed "one of the most blatant official episodes of anti-Semitism in 19th-century American history." Grant was convinced that the black market in cotton was organized "mostly by Jews and other unprincipled traders." On December 17th of that year, Grant issued his infamous General Order No. 11, which expelled all Jews from Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi:

The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department [the "Department of the Tennessee," was an administrative district of the Union Army of occupation composed of Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi] within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order.

Post commanders will see to it that all of this class of people be furnished passes and required to leave, and any one returning after such notification will be arrested and held in confinement until an opportunity occurs of sending them out as prisoners, unless furnished with permit from headquarters. No passes will be given these people to visit headquarters for the purpose of making personal application of trade permits.

⁸¹ http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/law/lwsch/journals/bclawr/42_4/03_FMS.htm, accessed March 12, 2009.

Some Jewish traders had to walk 40 miles on foot to evacuate the area. In Paducah, Kentucky, military officials gave the town's 30 Jewish families—all long-term residents, none of them speculators and at least two of them Union Army veterans—24 hours to leave.

A group including several influential Jews visited President Lincoln on January 3, 1863, and gave him a copy of Grant's Order. The President told General Halleck, General-in-Chief of the Union army, to have Grant revoke General Order No. 11. Halleck communicated the directive to Grant and Grant revoked the order three days later.

On January 6, a delegation called on Lincoln to express its gratitude that the order had been rescinded. Lincoln expressed surprise that Grant had issued such a command and stated his conviction that "to condemn a class is, to say the least, to wrong the good with the bad." He drew no distinction between Jew and Gentile, the president said, and would allow no American to be wronged because of his religious affiliation.⁸²

Grant's Order became an issue in the presidential campaign of 1868 and Grant issued a statement that he regretted issuing the order "without reflection." The lack of detailed voter statistics from the era precludes any real determination whether the Order and subsequent protests negatively impacted Jewish voters or if Grant's statement influenced them to support his candidacy (Medoff 2002, 182).

In each of these matters, Grant appears to adopt a rhetoric that is aimed at specific segments of the religious landscape. His references to polygamy are in opposition to the Mormon Church; his arguments against aid to religious affiliated schools and the tax-free

⁸² <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/anti-semitism/grant.html>, accessed March 12, 2009.

status of church property were almost certainly aimed at the Catholic Church; and his Civil War Order directed at Jews.

In contrast to the significant use of religious rhetoric by Grant, President Rutherford B. Hayes would use only a single specific religious reference in his four Annual Messages. In his 1877 message he referred to the Samoan Islands and noted that they had “made considerable progress in Christian civilization.” Otherwise Hayes would use general references to “the bountiful Giver of All Good” (1877 and 1879), “Providence” (1877), “Divine Being” (1878), and “Divine Providence” (1880).

In terms of policy Hayes would refer to Mormon control of the Utah Territorial government and note that “separation of church and state are among the elementary ideas of free institutions.” He would also note that his administration had urged the Emperor of Morocco to put “an end to the persecutions” in that country “of persons of a faith other than the Moslem, and especially of the Hebrew residents of Morocco” (1880).

1881 was unique in presidential politics in that there were three presidents in one year: [Rutherford B. Hayes](#) ended his term March 3, 1881; [James Garfield](#) was inaugurated the next day and died as a result of being shot on September 19, 1881; Chester A. Arthur took the oath of office September 20, 1881. Arthur would deliver his first State of the Union message on December 6, 1881.

In his first Annual Message Arthur would reference the deity using only various masculine pronouns referring to “His favor” and that tribute was owed to “Him who holds our destiny in His hands.” Referring to the loss of Garfield as the “mysterious exercise of His will” he noted the outpouring of sympathy from Americans and around the world. In 1882 he would refer to the “Giver of all Good.”

Returning to the issue of Utah and polygamy Arthur in 1881 would state that polygamy was “revolting to the moral and religious sense of Christendom.” In 1883 he would propose that Congress repeal the act establishing the Territorial government in Utah and assume political control of the Territory since polygamy had “become so strongly entrenched.” Arthur would use no religious rhetoric in his final message in 1884.

Grover Cleveland, the son of a minister, is the only president to serve two non-consecutive terms. Cleveland was not interested in following in the footsteps of his father. After his father’s death Cleveland was having trouble finding the money to continue his education. An [elder](#) in his church offered to pay for his college education if he would promise to become a minister, but Cleveland declined (Nevins 27).

Cleveland was elected president in 1884 but was unseated by [Benjamin Harrison](#) in 1888 despite getting more votes; Cleveland received 5,540,329 votes to Harrison’s 5,439,853. In 1892 Cleveland returned the favor by unseating Harrison and returning to office for another four-year term. He chose not to seek reelection in 1896.

In the first annual message in his first term Cleveland would touch on several subjects with religious references or rhetoric. In a lengthy section on foreign relations he noted the disapproval of the government of Austria-Hungary to the appointment of Anthony M. Keiley as Ambassador to that country. Austria-Hungary objected due to that fact that Keiley’s wife was Jewish. Cleveland would state that he could not acquiesce in the objection since it would violate his oath of office and apply a “religious test as a qualification for office” prohibited by Article VI of the Constitution. Although confirmed by the Senate Keiley would never serve in that capacity. Keiley, a former

confederate soldier, is perhaps better known for the book he wrote describing his experiences as a prisoner of war, *In Vinculis*; or, *The Prisoner of War*.

Cleveland would also return to the topic of Indian policy in a section of the message containing nearly 1800 words. Cleveland noted that the “history of all the progress which has been made in the civilization of the Indian” had its beginning in “religious teaching.” This was a tribute to the “self-sacrificing and pious men and women” who were rewarded with the “consciousness of Christian duty well performed.”

The ongoing issue of polygamy would also cause Cleveland to address Congress with religious rhetoric. First he noted that the officers elected in Utah subscribed to the “doctrine of polygamous marriages as a divine revelation and a law unto all higher and more binding upon the conscience than any human law, local or national.” But polygamy destroyed “our homes, established by the law of God.” Mothers in a polygamous home were not the “mothers of our land who rule the nation as they mold the characters and guide the actions of their sons, [and] live according to God’s holy ordinances.”

Cleveland also asserted that polygamy in the territories was being supported by immigration from other lands and recommended “that a law be passed to prevent the importation of Mormons into the country.” This last section produced the paradoxical conflict between his earlier chastisement of Austria-Hungary for refusing an envoy based on religion and precluding immigrants from entering the U.S. based solely on their religion (1885)

Indian policy would also be mentioned in his 1886 address when Cleveland noted that “Civilization, with the busy hum of industry and the influences of Christianity,

surrounds these people [Indians] at every point.” Cleveland would use no religious rhetoric in his 1887 message.

In 1888 Cleveland would note the accomplishments of Americans as they struggled for the “ennoblement and dignity of man...and for the achievement of the grand destiny awaiting the land which God had given them.” He also applauded the Empire of Brazil for “abolishing the last vestige of slavery among Christian nations.”

In this address Cleveland would again touch upon Indian policy and recount some of the atrocities Indians had suffered and committed. Cleveland believed education was the key to continued progress for the Indian people. It was through education that the “Indian race [could be] saved and the sin of their oppression redeemed.”

Although devoid of religious rhetoric, in another section Cleveland notes the increased prosecutions in the Utah territory for polygamy and the revocation of the charter and forfeiture of assets belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1888).

Benjamin Harrison would use religious rhetoric sparingly during his four annual messages with only a total of five references in his four messages. In his 1889 message Harrison would note the conferences being held with other countries in North and South America dealing with trade and security issues. The “crowning benefit” of these meetings he asserted “will be found in the better securities which may be devised for the maintenance of peace among all American nations and the settlement of all contentions by methods that a Christian civilization can approve.” He also commended “the Persian Government” for their “generous treatment of Americans engaged in missionary labors” (1889).

In 1890 he would note that the efforts to eliminate polygamy were not an “attempt to deal with the faith or belief of anyone” but that despite increased efforts we should not overlook the fact “that the doctrine or belief of the church that polygamous marriages are rightful and supported by divine revelation remains unchanged.” In 1891 he would note the emigration of “Hebrews” from Russia due to the “revival of anti-Semitic laws.” His 1892 message would include no religious rhetoric.

After reassuming the presidency in 1893 Grover Cleveland would use no religious rhetoric in the first two messages of his second term. In his final two messages religious references would be tied to foreign affairs. In 1895 he noted there was communication between his administration and Russian authorities regarding the Russian practice “to interrogate [American] citizens as to their race and religious faith...and to deny to Jews authentication of passports or legal documents for use in Russia.” This could possibly infringe upon the “treaty rights of our citizens.” He also noted the efforts by the United States to ascertain the validity of reported massacres of Christians in Turkey which exhibited “a spirit of fanatic hostility to Christian influences” and called upon “European powers” to exercise their treaty rights to intervene in the “religious freedom of the non-Mussulman subjects of the Sultan” (1895).

Conditions in Turkey would also be mentioned in Cleveland’s 1896 address. He noted the “continued and not unfrequent reports of the wanton destruction of homes and the bloody butchery of men, women, and children” that made them “martyrs to their profession of Christian faith.” These acts called out for action and should not be “long permitted to offend the sight of Christendom.” These acts were so egregious that it

seemed “hardly possible that the earnest demand of good people throughout the Christian world for its corrective treatment will remain unanswered” (1896).

William McKinley

Sidney Ahlstrom, in his epic volume on religion in America, called the election of 1896 “one of the most revelatory events in American religious history. As in no other election, both candidates virtually personified American Protestantism. Both William Jennings Bryan and William McKinley were reared in pious homes, educated in denominational colleges and guided throughout their lives by the tradition and practices of evangelicalism” (Ahlstrom 878-879). The victor, McKinley was to be described as “the most important 19th century Republican after Lincoln (Phillips 3).

For William McKinley, the seventh of nine children, the path to the presidency was grounded in devotion to a religion that played a significant role in his life. The McKinley’s had been Scotch-Irish Presbyterians committed to Kirk⁸³ and covenant. But not long after arriving in Ohio, they became Methodists, caught up in the revivalism of the early nineteenth century. By 1844, when the Methodist Church divided between north and south, Methodism had become America’s most popular creed, with over a million members and almost twelve thousand local and itinerant preachers. This itinerant capacity, together with an emphasis on camp meetings—so named for the tents that provide early housing—particularly equipped the Methodists to evangelize an ever-expanding frontier (Phillips 16).

⁸³ The Kirk (of Scotland) is the national church of Scotland. It is a Presbyterian church, decisively shaped by the Scottish Reformation; <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/organisation/orghistory.htm>, accessed June 4, 2008.

The future president's mother, Nancy Allison McKinley, was devout and strongly influenced her son. Her ancestors had fled England to live in Holland where they could better practice their Puritanism (Morgan 3). Her religious devotion extended to her children and she saw to it that they were enrolled in Sunday school before regular school.

Mother McKinley and her sister had charge of the Methodist Church in their hometown of Niles, Ohio, where McKinley's parents were charter members. They swept, scrubbed, painted and tended it with the same efficient thoroughness they applied to their own houses. According to one recollection they "ran the church, all but the preaching" (Morgan 4).

McKinley's family moved to Poland, Ohio, so the children could attend the academy there (equivalent to high school). Though founded by Presbyterians, the institution had passed to the control of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which the McKinley family attended. McKinley's efforts to discover God's design produced a devout piety. His sincere lifelong adherence to Methodism in part reflected a deep attachment to his mother, for whom the church was the center of existence. She longed to have one of her sons pursue the ministry and William's diligence and aptitude for study seemed to mark him for this path. When McKinley showed an early interest in religion his mother began to cherish hopes that he might one day become a Methodist bishop (Armstrong 7). She often said that she was sorry he had only become president when he could have had such a useful and brilliant career in the church (Morgan 9). She was not alone. His devotion to church and religious affairs led many of his associates to believe McKinley "would become a minister" (Armstrong 7).

The Ohio of McKinley's youth reflected the just-past-the-frontier culture of the burgeoning Midwest: a new unpolished middle class given to teetotaling Methodism, religious camp meetings, and small town values (Phillips 15). The church at Poland held many vigorous camp meetings and revivals. It was at such a camp meeting where William, at the age of sixteen, came forward with his sister Sarah to "profess" his religion. His studious attention to Sunday school lessons and long talks with teachers and prominent laymen had already marked him as a prize addition to the church.

McKinley, "without any excitement or previous intimation" stood and addressed the assembled congregation and "announced his intention of leading a Christian life" and requested baptism. On this occasion McKinley stated that "God is the being above all to be loved and served" and that religion "seems to me to be the best thing in the world." He publicly acknowledged his commitment and stated: "Here I take my stand for life" (Armstrong 7).

Described by some as not so much a dogma as a world view, McKinley's religion stressed personal security, optimism and tolerance, with a touch of fatalism (Morgan 9). Religion became a powerful force in McKinley's life. McKinley's first minister, Aaron Morton, said he "was not what you would call a 'shouting Methodist,' but rather one who was careful of his acts and words . . ." (Phillips 17).

McKinley was the last of the Civil War veterans to reach the White House and the only one who had served in the ranks of enlisted men. In 1861, in response to Lincoln's call for volunteers, a volunteer company was assembled in Poland, Ohio. After drilling for several days in preparation for their departure, the men were given New Testaments and boarded the train to Columbus. One interested observer who listened to the speeches

and participated in the fanfare accompanying their departure was William McKinley. After this experience, the eighteen-year-old McKinley decided to enlist. He was mustered into service on June 13th (Armstrong 3).

Military service, especially in times of combat, can have profound effects on participants. McKinley was no different. He stated that his first year of service in the ranks was a “formative period” in his life during which he “learned much of men and facts” (Armstrong 1). His regiment—the Twenty-third Ohio Volunteer Infantry—was scarcely less religious than his own home environment. Nicknamed the “psalm-singers of the Western Reserve,” they followed a routine he described to his sister as “religious exercises in the company twice a day, prayer meetings twice a week, and preaching in the regiment once on a Sabbath” (Phillips 16).

In a letter to his sister, Anna, McKinley told her about the frequent religious gatherings in his regiment. Entries in his diary show how heartfelt his own participation in the meetings was: “I found them precious to my soul—in fact, I felt more of the love of God in my heart at these meetings than I have felt for some time before.” Again he wrote: “[I] attended prayer meeting in the evening; I for one testified of the goodness of God. Many were the witnesses for Jesus. The spirit was at work in all of our hearts.” When Gaylord Hawkins, the minister of the Methodist Church in Poland, visited Camp Chase, McKinley listened to him preach and then wrote in his diary: “All day I felt the love of God in my heart and notwithstanding the surroundings there was an inward calmness and tranquility which belongs to the Christian alone” (Armstrong 11).

On the night before his company was to march into an area with expected confrontations with guerilla soldiers, McKinley wrote in his diary: “Tomorrow’s sun will

undoubtedly find me on a march. It may be that I will never see the light of another day. Should this be my fate, I fall in a good cause and hope to fall in the arms of my blessed redeemer. This record I want left behind, that I not only fell as a soldier for my Country, but also a Soldier of Jesus. . . if we never meet again on earth, we will meet around God's throne in heaven" (Armstrong 18). Later, in a note to his family, he stated that if he were to die in battle that he wanted it said that he fell not only in defense of his country but as a "soldier for my Redeemer" (Armstrong 20). As the war lengthened and McKinley rose in rank, he gave up his habit of referring to himself as a soldier of Jesus, as well as of the North. Even so, religion remained prominent in his speech (Phillips 16).

In his four annual messages McKinley's use of religious rhetoric would be minimal in his first two messages and increase for the last two. McKinley would welcome the fifty-fifth Congress in his first annual message with "grateful acknowledgement to a beneficent Providence" but would also describe actions in the ongoing conflict in Cuba as showing "an utter disregard of the laws of civilized warfare" which "called forth expressions of condemnation from the nations of Christendom" (1897).

Ongoing issues with Spain over the island of Cuba would escalate with the explosion on the battleship *Maine* anchored in the bay at Havana on February 15, 1898. McKinley had hoped to resolve the matter peacefully but the pro-war forces were to prevail. On April 11, 1898, McKinley appeared before Congress to ask for a declaration of war against Spain. After only 113 days of fighting on land and sea, the United States claimed victory. What Secretary of State John Hay called a "splendid little war"⁸⁴

⁸⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/07/09/opinion/1-credit-splendid-little-war-to-john-hay-595391.html>, accessed March 20, 2009.

provided the United States with additional possessions. Its troops occupied the Spanish colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and part of the Philippines.

Religious inspiration may have played a part in McKinley's policy toward the Philippines and could account for his use of religious rhetoric when addressing that policy. In an interview with General James Rusling in 1903 McKinley recounted how he agonized over what action the United States should take regarding the islands. He said that he "walked the floor of the White House night after night" and would often "go down on his knees and [pray to] Almighty God for light and guidance." One night, he said, it came to him that America should keep the islands and "educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died" (Rusling 17).

McKinley's 1898 message was delivered on December 5, 1898, less than a week before the signing of the Treaty of Paris officially ended the war. His only religious reference in this address would be to note "we are constantly reminded of our obligations to the Divine Master for His watchful care over us and His safe guidance... [for which the nation] offers humble prayer for the continuance of His favor."

In what would be his final two messages, McKinley's use of religious rhetoric increased. In his 1899 message McKinley would note that there had been no provision for chaplains during the recent mobilization of military troops. Perhaps recalling his own military experience he recommended "early authorization for the appointment of one chaplain for each of said regiments." He would also go to some lengths to assure the Filipino people that America's intentions were not to make war against them but to protect them, their property and "their personal and religious rights." He would note that

security had improved, schools were reopened and “[r]eligious freedom is sacredly assured and enjoyed” in the Islands.

McKinley would return to this theme in 1900 and state that certain rules must be imposed upon “every division and branch of the government of the Philippines.” These included: “that no law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, and that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship without discrimination or preference shall forever be allowed.” Further “that no form of religion and no minister of religion shall be forced upon any community or upon any citizen of the islands; that, upon the other hand, no minister of religion shall be interfered with or molested in following his calling and that the separation between State and Church shall be real, entire, and absolute.”

McKinley would state that this religious freedom was part of the “sacred” obligation that rested on the United States and he hoped the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands would one day look back “with gratitude to the day when God gave victory to American arms at Manila and set their land under the sovereignty and the protection of the people of the United States.”

What accounts for the increase of religious rhetoric in the last two messages as opposed to the first two? As noted, McKinley expressed providential inspiration in determining policy regarding the Philippines. Given this fact it might appear natural that he would include more rhetoric of a religious nature when discussing issues surrounding the Philippines.

While his official rhetoric was laced with religious references, McKinley left few personal papers and very little in the way of written records, leading one scholar to note

that ‘the minds of few public men have been so well concealed’ (Leech 36 quoted in Phillips 30). He did not leave the “sort of paper trail usually required to pique the interest of intellectuals” (Phillips 110).

While appearing at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo President McKinley was shot by an anarchist named Leon Czolgosz. After being shot and as the ether was being administered, McKinley spoke the Lord’s Prayer (Morgan 399). Nine days after being shot McKinley’s condition worsened. Late in the afternoon of September 14th, 1901, the president began to realize the situation was hopeless. He told the assembled doctors and others: “It is useless, gentlemen. I think we ought to have prayer.” Later that night he said good-bye to his wife and a small assemblage of friends and family: “Good-bye, good-bye all. It is God’s way. His will, not ours, be done.” He murmured, as best he could, the words to his favorite hymn, “Nearer My God to Thee.” They were his last words (Morgan 402).

1901-1932

In his article detailing his concept of an American civil religion Robert Bellah notes the popular notion of martyrdom attributed to Abraham Lincoln. In the American civil religion this parallels the death of Jesus in the Christian religion. Lincoln was perceived as the savior of the Union who gave his life for his country. The theme of sacrifice and rebirth entered the sphere of civil religion (Bellah).

In his first State of the Union message after assuming the presidency Teddy Roosevelt, likewise, drew comparisons to the assassination of his predecessor, William McKinley. The message was delivered less than 3 months after McKinley died. As might be expected, Roosevelt begins his message with considerable attention (over 2,000

words) to the loss of McKinley, “the most widely loved man in all the United States,” and the assassin. He compares the act as having “Judas-like infamy.” The assassination was successful not because of any prior association between McKinley and his murderer but because the assassin “took advantage” of an opportunity presented by the fact McKinley was greeting the public in “kindly and brotherly fellowship...to strike the fatal blow.”

Roosevelt focused not only on McKinley’s assassin, Leon Czoglosz, a self-described anarchist, but anarchy in general. He described anarchy as “no more an expression of ‘social discontent’ than picking pockets or wife-beating.” Czoglosz was a “criminal” who had been “inflamed” not only “by the teachings of professed anarchists” but was probably influenced “by the reckless utterances of those who, on the stump and in the public press, appeal to the dark and evil spirits of malice and greed, envy and sullen hatred.” He uses, without attribution, a verse from Hosea to describe those individuals: “The wind is sowed by the men who preach such doctrines, and they cannot escape their share of responsibility for the whirlwind that is reaped.”⁸⁵ He would later refer to the notion of man being “his brother’s keeper” as “being the indispensable prerequisite to success in the kind of national life for which we strive.” For his audience this no doubt recalled images of the Biblical story of Cain and Abel.⁸⁶

Roosevelt would make reference to a deity in four other passages. In encouraging immigration he stated that America “needed” immigrants with “a strong body, a stout heart, a good head, and a resolute purpose ... to bring up his children as law-abiding and God-fearing members of the community.” He would also reference “the Most High”

⁸⁵ Hosea 8:7-*For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk; the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.* (KJV)

⁸⁶ Genesis 4:9-*And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not, Am I my brother’s keeper?* (KJV)

(regarding McKinley's final thoughts), "the Lord" (noting human wisdom was powerless to avert any calamity brought by the hand of the Lord) and "the Almighty" (1901).

While religious rhetoric and imagery were notable in his first (1901) message, Roosevelt would use no religious rhetoric in his next two messages. He would return to religious rhetoric in his fourth message with a total of six references. In discussing foreign policy, Roosevelt noted that it was the tendency for the American people to focus on "striving for our own moral and material betterment here at home than to concern ourselves with trying to better the condition of things in other nations." We had plenty of "sins" here at home, Roosevelt asserted, and could do more for the "general uplifting of humanity...by striving with heart and soul to put a stop to civic corruption, to brutal lawlessness and violent race prejudices here at home than by passing resolutions about wrongdoing elsewhere." He would further his point with language from the Bible: "There must be no effort made to remove the mote from our brother's eye if we refuse to remove the beam from our own." Similar references are found in five verses of the King James Version including Matthew 7:5: "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Roosevelt would comment on the treatment of Americans in foreign lands due to their religious beliefs such as the denial of passports to "American Jews" by Russia "without regard to his conduct and character, merely on racial and religious grounds." He would observe that Americans with their "belief in the principles of civil and religious liberty" would express "horror" when events "like that of the massacre of the Jews in Kishenev" occurred (1904).

Roosevelt would return to a Biblical reference in his 1905 message. Recognizing the historical conflicts among nations Roosevelt proclaimed: “No object is better worthy the attention of enlightened statesmanship than the establishment of a surer method than now exists of securing justice as between nations, both for the protection of the little nations and for the prevention of war between the big nations.” In terms of what should guide our relationships with other countries he asserted that “The Golden Rule should be, and as the world grows in morality it will be, the guiding rule of conduct among nations as among individuals...” As noted, many religious faiths express some version of the ‘rule of reciprocity’ in their sacred texts. For Christians, it is often referred to as the “Golden Rule.” The language often referred to in this manner is located in the New Testament including Luke 6:31: “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” [KJV]; and Matthew 7:12: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” [KJV].

Roosevelt would also return to a theme he addressed in his 1901 message. In his first message he noted that “If the hand of the Lord is heavy upon any country, if flood or drought comes, human wisdom is powerless to avert the calamity.” He used similar language in 1905: “Against the wrath of the Lord the wisdom of man cannot avail; in time of flood or drought human ingenuity can but partially repair the disaster.” He would also mention religion as it related to immigrants stating that “We (America) cannot afford to consider whether he is Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile...” He would repeat that language in his 1906 message stating that it “matters nothing” whether the immigrants were “Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile...” (1905).

Roosevelt's 1906 message also addresses the racial attacks and lynchings that were occurring in the country. Quoting Bishop Charles Galloway of Mississippi, a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Roosevelt said that "Every Christian patriot in America needs to lift up his voice in loud and eternal protest against the mob spirit that is threatening the integrity of this Republic."

Addressing the problem of low birth rates in certain parts of the country, Roosevelt would compare it to a "sin" in language that would surely resonate with his audience. He said:

"Surely it should need no demonstration to show that willful sterility is, from the standpoint of the nation, from the standpoint of the human race, the one sin for which the penalty is national death, race death; a sin for which there is no atonement; a sin which is the more dreadful exactly in proportion as the men and women guilty thereof are in other respects, in character, and bodily and mental powers, those whom for the sake of the state it would be well to see the fathers and mothers of many healthy children, well brought up in homes made happy by their presence" (1906).

Roosevelt would use a single religious reference in 1907. Noting that there were those in America who denounced "militarism," Roosevelt said militarism was a "non-existent evil." He asserted the real enemy was industrialism and cited statistics showing that deaths in industrial accidents exceeded those of Americans lost in foreign wars. A military was necessary for future eventualities but America was pledged to do all it could to foster international peace. Complaints against militarism, Roosevelt said, had "no more serious place in an earnest and intelligent movement for righteousness in this country than declamation against the worship of Baal or Astaroth [*sic*]." Baal and Ashtaroth were pagan gods mentioned in a variety of places in the Bible. For example, Judges 2:13, "And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (KJV).

Roosevelt would use no religious rhetoric in his final message in 1908.

William Howard Taft is unique among presidents regarding his use of religious rhetoric in the State of the Union—he is the only president that did not include a single reference of religious rhetoric in any of his State of the Union messages. Perhaps his reluctance to use such language was due to his ‘judicial’ temperament. A graduate of Yale and the University of Cincinnati Law School, Taft coveted appointment to the Supreme Court (an appointment he would obtain following his presidency when he was named Chief Justice by President Harding). Early in his career Taft served on the Ohio Superior Court and was appointed to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. It was his temperament that caused problems for Taft as a political leader. Taft was very passive in legislative matters, and had a tendency to contemplate all sides of a question at great length.⁸⁷ But this alone cannot explain the absence of religious rhetoric. Other presidents were trained in the law and did not hesitate to utilize religious rhetoric.

Perhaps it was Taft’s personal religious beliefs. Taft was a Unitarian, subscribing to a belief in God but not the divinity of Christ.⁸⁸ Another factor may have been the fact that all four of Taft’s State of the Union messages were written communications to Congress. Perhaps it is an indication that religious rhetoric is deemed more appropriate if spoken and not a part of a sterile, written report.

Or perhaps it was simply the tenor of the times. Society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was being influenced by the Social Gospel, the Protestant Christian movement designed to reform society as well as the individual. It has been defined as “the application of the teaching of Jesus and the total message of the Christian salvation

⁸⁷ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/taft/essays/biography/9>, accessed May 6, 2008.

⁸⁸ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/taft/essays/biography/2>, accessed May 6, 2008.

to society, the economic life, and social institutions . . . as well as to individuals” (White and Hopkins 1976, xi). Given this close association with reform policies, perhaps it was not necessary for presidents to use religious rhetoric to emphasize a religious or moral dimension because the people understood the connection.

So when Taft notes that “For a very considerable period a movement has been gathering strength. . . in favor of a concentration of the instruments of the National Government which have to do with the promotion of public health,” (Taft 1909), it was not necessary to bolster the recommendation with the language of the Social Gospel or religion.

In the nine years from Teddy Roosevelt’s eighth message in 1908 until Wilson’s fourth in 1916, there was only one usage of religious rhetoric (a reference to “God’s providence” in Wilson’s second address in 1914).

Following the tumultuous election of 1912 in which Woodrow Wilson defeated an incumbent president and an ex-president, Wilson would assume office in 1913. In terms of his use of religious rhetoric in the State of the Union address Wilson ranks as one of the presidents with the lowest average number of references. Overall he used religious rhetoric less than any president with the exception of Nixon, Harding and Taft. Despite his minimal use of religious rhetoric in the State of the Union messages Wilson was religious personally. The son of a minister Wilson has been described as an orthodox Presbyterian who “read the Bible daily and attended religious services faithfully (Brands 25). He had been educated in the belief that nothing happened without divine participation and typically believed he acted in accordance to God’s plan. Indeed he is

reported to have remarked that God had “ordained” that he be the president of the United States (Brand 25).

As previously noted, Wilson reinstated the tradition of delivering oral addresses to Congress and his messages were considerably shorter than those delivered by most 19th century presidents and Wilson’s immediate predecessors. His eight messages averaged only 4356 words, the fewest since Madison.

In his eight messages, Wilson would employ religious rhetoric only six times—five of those came in 1917 (3) and 1918 (2). In five of his eight messages he would use no religious rhetoric.

In 1917 Wilson would address the issue of a future peace in Europe and assert that it could only come after the “present masters of Germany” were shown the futility of their “claim to power or leadership in the modern world.” Only then could “right be set up as arbiter and peacemaker among the nations.” That day would come “God willing” and we would then “be free to base peace on generosity and justice, to the exclusions of all selfish claims to advantage even on the part of the victors.”

Wilson would close his 1917 address with the observation that even though we were enmeshed in a great struggle that we were committed to prosecuting to an ultimate conclusion “we have not forgotten any ideal or principle for which the name of America has been held in honor among the nations and for which it has been our glory to contend in the great generations that went before us . . . The hand of God is laid upon the nations. He will show them favor, I devoutly believe, only if they rise to the clear heights of His own justice and mercy” (1917).

Wilson's 1918 address came less than a month after the armistice with Germany was signed. His two religious references in this address were to "thank God" for the services of the American soldiers and the women who had been so vital to the effort. He said: "...we all thank God ...with deepest gratitude ...that our men went in force into the line of battle just at the critical moment when the whole fate of the world seemed to hang in the balance and threw their fresh strength into the ranks of freedom ..."

Regarding women in the war effort he stated that women with "their instant intelligence...their capacity for organization and cooperation, which gave their action discipline and enhanced the effectiveness of everything they attempted; their aptitude at tasks to which they had never before set their hands; their utter self-sacrifice alike in what they did and in what they gave" provided a "contribution to the great result" that was "beyond appraisal. They have added a new luster to the annals of American womanhood." Because of their actions Wilson says that deserved a "tribute...to make them the equals of men in political rights as they have proved themselves their equals in every field of practical work they have entered..." This would be an "act of justice" Wilson went on to recount how women had been the driving force, not only here at home, but in efforts to send humanitarian aid to the "suffering peoples of the world and the armies at every front..." The details of their acts could never be fully written, Wilson said, "but we carry them at our hearts and thank God that we can say that we are the kinsmen of such" (1918).

Warren G. Harding would assume the presidency in 1921 and before his sudden death in August, 1923, deliver two annual messages. Harding won the Ohio Republican primary for senator in 1914 and beat Attorney General Timothy Hogan in the general

election. Harding's supporters viciously attacked Hogan for being a Catholic intent on delivering Ohio to the pope. The religion issue dominated the election and gave Harding, a Baptist, an overwhelming victory, though he never personally mentioned religion in his speeches.⁸⁹

Harding was a compromise choice for the Republican presidential nomination in 1920 after the frontrunners (Leonard Wood, former Army Chief of Staff and Military Governor of Cuba, and Frank O. Lowden, Governor of Illinois) were unable to secure sufficient delegates. Party leaders designated Harding as the compromise candidate and he secured the nomination on the tenth ballot. In his speech accepting the nomination Harding would refer to "God" on five different occasions. The American people, he said, were "ready to serve ourselves, humanity and God." Americans must address economic inequalities in order to "re-establish God's plan for the great tomorrow." Americans were, he stated, "...a fortunate people but a very commonsensical people, with vision high, but their feet on the earth, with belief in themselves and faith in God." Harding said he could "only pray to the Omnipotent God that I may be as worthy in service as I know myself to be faithful in thought and purpose."

Harding accepted the Republican nomination "With an unalterable faith and in a hopeful spirit, with a hymn of service in my heart," and pledged "fidelity to our country and to God."⁹⁰

As President, Harding often seemed overwhelmed by the burdens of his administration. He frequently confided to his friends that the job was beyond him.⁹¹

⁸⁹ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/harding/essays/biography/2>, accessed May 7, 2008.

⁹⁰ Warren G. Harding, Address Accepting the Republican Nomination for President, June 12, 1920, The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=76198>, accessed June 4, 2008.

Harding's administration was mired in one scandal after another including the Teapot Dome scandal. Both his Secretary of the Interior and Director of the Veterans Bureau would subsequently be imprisoned for corruption and his close friend and Attorney General, Harry Daugherty, would manage to avoid an impeachment attempt and beat two indictments for defrauding the government. Shaken by the talk of corruption among the friends he had appointed to office, Warren and Florence Harding began a tour of the Western United States and Alaska on June 20, 1923. Although suffering from high blood pressure and an enlarged heart, he seemed to enjoy himself – especially in Alaska. On his return journey, he became ill with what was then attributed to a touch of ptomaine (food) poisoning. The presidential train rushed to San Francisco, where his condition worsened. On August 2, he most likely suffered a heart attack in the evening, while his wife was reading to him. He died quietly and instantaneously.

Harding's personal life was not without controversy. Harding had at least two affairs. The first came to light in 1927 with a book published by one of his lovers, Nan Britton, and in 1963, when love letters written by Harding to Carrie Phillips were uncovered. His affair with Carrie Phillips, wife of his longtime friend James Phillips, lasted for more than fifteen years, beginning in Marion, Ohio in 1905. At one point, Phillips had tried to blackmail him into voting against a declaration of war on Germany. As a German sympathizer who had lived in Berlin off and on, she had fallen under the surveillance of the U.S. Secret Service. In 1920, the Republican National Committee bribed Mr. and Mrs. Phillips with a free, slow trip to Japan, \$20,000 in cash, and the promise of monthly payments to keep them quiet.

⁹¹ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/harding/essays/biography/4>, accessed May 7, 2008.

While seeing Carrie Phillips, Harding also was deeply involved with his so-called “niece,” Nan Britton, a pretty blonde thirty years younger than Harding. Their affair began in 1917, when Britton wrote him asking for a job. Harding put her to work in a clerical position at the U.S. Steel Corporation in Washington, D.C. They continued their affair (often seeing each other in the Oval Office) until his death. Nan gave birth to a baby girl on October 22, 1919, named Elizabeth Ann Christian. Harding never saw the child but made generous child support payments that were hand delivered by the Secret Service. After his death, Britton sued Harding’s estate to gain a trust fund for her daughter. Failing that, she wrote a best-selling book that recounted the specific logistics of the affair in great detail.

Unlike his speech accepting the presidential nomination, Harding’s two annual messages contained no references to “God” or a deity. The one reference he made in his 1921 address that could be classified as a religious reference was a passing reference to establishing “elemental rights, dealing with the relations of employer and employee.” This would “hasten the building of the temple of peace in industry which a rejoicing nation would acclaim.” His 1922 address contained no religious rhetoric.

This lack of religious rhetoric was in stark contrast to Harding’s 1921 inaugural address. As noted in the previous chapter, Harding’s inaugural address contained twelve religious references. Among those references, he spoke of “God’s intent in the making of this new-world Republic;” how he would “rejoice” to “acclaim the era of the Golden Rule;” the “reassurance in belief in the God-given destiny of our Republic;” that Americans had common concerns and shared responsibilities and were answerable “to God and country;” he implored the “favor and guidance of God in His Heaven;” and

quoted from the Book of Micah. He referred to efforts to lessen the probability of war and promoting “that brotherhood of mankind which must be God’s highest conception of human relationship.” Harding noted his “most reverent prayer” for industrial peace and his belief that the founding fathers had been divinely inspired.

The dramatic difference in Harding’s rhetoric might be a notable example of the distinction president’s placed on the rhetoric of the inaugural and the State of the Union message, at least before the advent of televised addresses to Congress became commonplace. There is no reason to believe that Harding was more religious in March of 1921 than he was in December of that year or in 1922. On the one hand inaugurals were ceremonial and called for rhetoric of a more exalted nature. The annual messages were more programmatic and were intended for Congressional consumption primarily.

Following his untimely death, Harding was succeeded by his vice-president, Calvin Coolidge. Coolidge was the Governor of Massachusetts and had gone to Chicago in 1920 as his state’s favorite-son candidate for the presidential nomination but only received thirty-four votes. When party leaders met to decide on a compromise candidate they settled on Harding. Coolidge was not their choice for vice-president. Instead they preferred Senator Irving Lenroot of Wisconsin. But when his name was placed into nomination rebellious delegates gave the vice-presidential nod to Coolidge.

In his first State of the Union message following the death of Harding, Coolidge chose not to devote a considerable portion of his address to his predecessor. Unlike other vice-presidents who had ascended to the presidency following the assassination or death of a president, Coolidge stated that “this is not the occasion for extended reference to the man or his work.” Coolidge would also reverse the trend since Taft of using minimal

religious rhetoric. Most of his rhetoric in this regard would be general and referred to matters such as ‘the spiritual side of life,’ ‘the service of the soul,’ and ‘dominion over the things that are spiritual.’

In his first message (1923), Coolidge went through a laundry list of issues. Devoting only paragraphs to each subject he discussed issues such as foreign affairs, the World Court, Russia, foreign papers, foreign service, debts, tariff law, the fiscal condition of the government, public improvements, railroads, the Department of Justice, prohibition, the Negro, immigration, the Army and Navy, education and welfare.

In stating that he did not think the government was not “doing as much as it legitimately can do to promote the welfare of the people,” Coolidge noted that the United States had “enacted laws for the protection of the public health and...adopted prohibition in narcotic drugs and intoxicating liquors.” He also called “for a limitation of child labor, and a [Federal] minimum wage law for women.”

In discussing education, Coolidge called for the creation of a Department of Education, “...a separate department and a place in the Cabinet.” Mere intelligence was not enough, however, “Enlightenment must be accompanied by that moral power which is the product of the home and of religion” (1923).

In his second message (1924), Coolidge stated that the country could not stand still, that it must go forward, but in doing so it would not “abandon the theory of the Declaration that the people have inalienable rights.” These were protected by our Constitution but were “imposed not by the fiat of man but by the law of the Creator.” Living under a “Government of freedom and equality, of justice and mercy, of education

and charity” had allowed the people to “come into great possessions on the material and spiritual sides of life.”

In 1925 Coolidge would again address a number of issues. In discussing “the Negro” and the discrimination and violence they were being subjected to he stated that “Bigotry is only another name for slavery.” An “enlarged freedom” for them could “only be secured by the application of the golden rule. No other utterance ever presented such a practical rule of life.” He concluded his third message stating that all the efforts of government “would be of little avail unless they brought more justice, more enlightenment, more happiness and prosperity into the home.” For Coolidge this meant “an opportunity to observe religion, secure education, and earn a living under a reign of law and order... [and] the growth and improvement of the material and spiritual life of the Nation.” But we could not attain those things “merely by our own action.” If we were to secure those blessings, it would “be because we have been willing to work in harmony with the abiding purpose of a Divine Providence” (1925).

In his fourth State of the Union address Coolidge concluded with a section he labeled as “American Ideals.” America needed high ideals that rewarded hard work with success. These ideals and governmental policies to achieve them would permit us to focus not only on our material needs but would serve a higher purpose. He concluded: “To relieve the land of the burdens that came from the war, to release to the individual more of the fruits of his own industry, to increase his earning capacity and decrease his hours of labor, to enlarge the circle of his vision through good roads and better transportation, to place before him the opportunity for education both in science and in art, to leave him free to receive the inspiration of religion, all these are ideals which

deliver him from the servitude of the body and exalt him to the service of the soul.

Through this emancipation from the things that are material, we broaden our dominion over the things that are spiritual” (1926).

Coolidge’s 1927 message was the only one that did not contain religious rhetoric.

Coolidge chose not to run for re-election in 1928. His 1928 address was delivered on December 4, 1928, after the election of Herbert Hoover. He would conclude his sixth and final message with a paragraph noting that the purpose of government was “to keep open the opportunity for a more abundant life.” “Peace and prosperity” could be the factors that might cause a “nation to become selfish and degenerate.” The United States now faced that challenge. “Our country,” Coolidge concluded, had “been provided with the resources with which it can enlarge its intellectual, moral, and spiritual life.” It was up to the people to determine how they would use those resources. It was “Our faith in man and God” that provided the “justification for the belief in our continuing success” (1928).

Herbert Hoover was raised a Quaker and although he rarely went to Meeting as an adult, he internalized that faith’s belief in the power of the individual, the importance of freedom, and the value of “conscientious work” and charity.⁹² When accepting the Republican nomination in 1928 Hoover promised “a final triumph over poverty.” This optimism would not come to fruition during a term leading up to the Great Depression.

Religion and Prohibition quickly emerged as the most volatile and energizing issues in the campaign of 1928. Hoover’s opponent, New York governor Alfred E. Smith, was a Catholic. No Catholic had ever been elected President and the campaign was filled with vicious rumors and anti-Catholic rhetoric. Numerous Protestant preachers

⁹² <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/hoover/essays/biography/2>, accessed May 9, 2008.

in rural areas delivered sermons warning their congregations that a vote for Smith was a vote for the Devil. Anti-Smith literature, distributed by the resurgent Ku Klux Klan, claimed that President Smith would take orders from the Pope, declare all Protestant children illegitimate, annul Protestant marriages, and establish Catholicism as the nation's official religion. When Smith addressed a massive rally in Oklahoma City on the subject of religious intolerance, fiery KKK crosses burned around the stadium and a hostile crowd jeered him as he spoke. The next evening, thousands filled the same stadium to hear an anti-Smith speech entitled, "Al Smith and the Forces of Hell."⁹³ Hoover easily won the popular vote receiving 21,392,190 votes to Smith's 15,016,443. Hoover won the Electoral College by a vote of 444 to 87.

While Hoover employed religious rhetoric in his four State of the Union messages, the language was strikingly similar and very general often referring to "spiritual" matters. In reporting to the Congress he asserted that "moral and spiritual forces have been maintained" and that we had seen "the growth of religious spirit [and] the tolerance of all faiths" (1929); proclaimed that "our country is more alive to its problems of moral and spiritual welfare" (1930); that America "must be a country" that would enlarge "spiritual opportunity" (1931); and that American traditions had gone through "a century and a half of struggle for ideals of life that are rooted in religion and fed from purely spiritual springs" (1932). Hoover used only a total of five references of religious rhetoric in his four State of the Union messages.

Overall, Hoover and the other Quaker president, Richard Nixon, rank in the lower twenty-five percent of American presidents in their use of religious rhetoric in the State

⁹³ <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/hoover/essays/biography/3>, accessed May 9, 2008.

of the Union. Perhaps future study will help to determine if their common religious background contributed to their reticence to use such rhetoric.

FDR

In many ways Franklin Roosevelt represents the enigma of the use of religious rhetoric by presidents. In his first five annual messages (1934-1938) FDR used only a total of five examples of religious rhetoric. In two of those (1937 and 1938) he did not use a single instance of religious rhetoric. Then, in his 1939 message, he used a total of fifteen references—the most of any president in a single address. His final six messages would average 3.3 references per address highlighted by 6 in 1941 and 7 in 1942.

In his first annual message delivered on January 3, 1934, Roosevelt gave the shortest of his 12 State of the Union addresses consisting of only 2243 words. In his address Roosevelt mentioned that his plan for flood control, power development and land use policy would enable “our people to take better advantage of the opportunities which God has given our country.”

He would use a single reference in 1935 as well. Roosevelt said that he sensed “a spiritual recovery” in America and that the people of America were turning “as never before to those permanent values that are not limited to the physical objectives of life.” Because of these “spiritual impulses” Americans were “sensible of the Divine Providence to which Nations turn now, as always, for guidance and fostering care” (1935).

In 1936, his third annual message, Roosevelt would state that America had “sought by every legitimate means” to exert moral influence “against repression, against intolerance, against autocracy and in favor of freedom of expression, equality before the law, religious tolerance and popular rule” in their foreign policy. Domestically he said

we were seeing a resurgence of “autocrats”—a minority of business and industry leaders who were attempting to gain control of government. We could expect them, he said, to act towards the people’s business as they did in their business dealings. In describing these people he quoted without attribution Matthew 7:20, “By their fruits ye shall know them” [KJV].

Roosevelt would close his third annual message with a quote from an unnamed “wise philosopher” whose feet Roosevelt said he had sat at “many, many years ago.” Americans had “the honor to belong to a generation whose lips are touched by fire.” And even though the “human race now passes through one of its great crises,” there was “a new call for men to carry on the work of righteousness, of charity, of courage, of patience, and of loyalty.” When Americans look back on this time they should remember it as “the beginning of a new era” when the “world in its crisis called for volunteers, for men of faith in life, of patience in service, of charity and of insight.” Americans should take pride in the fact that they “responded to the call” however they could. They could say, “I volunteered to give myself to my Master—the cause of humane and brave living. I studied, I loved, I labored, unsparingly and hopefully, to be worthy of my generation.”

The source of this quote appears to be an article written by Harvard professor of philosophy Josiah Royce titled “A Word for the Times” which had been printed in the December, 1914, *Harvard Graduates’ Magazine*. FDR was a member of the 1904 Harvard class and a copy of the magazine is among FDR’s collection of books related to his youth and education.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Letter from Bob Clark, Supervisory Archivist, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, to the author dated May 12, 2008.

As noted, Roosevelt would use no religious rhetoric in his 1937 or 1938 messages.

1939

Why was Roosevelt's address in 1939 replete with religious rhetoric? The address was 3781 words long, just under the average length of Roosevelt's 12 addresses (average length 3965 words). Economic progress had been made at home and "a war which threatened to envelop the world in flames," Roosevelt said, had been averted "but world peace" was not assured. I would suggest that Roosevelt was using this message to educate the American people on the need for action, to unify them and make them understand that there was "danger from within and from without" that America could not control but for which we must prepare. "The hour-glass," he said, "may be in the hands of other nations." Americans were in a race, "a race to make democracy work, so that we may be efficient in peace and therefore secure in national defense."

Roosevelt's address was given to a joint session of Congress but his broader audience was the American people. He spoke to them in a language they could understand and which defined what was at stake in no uncertain terms. The "storms from abroad" challenged "three institutions indispensable to Americans." The first of these, religion, was the source of the other two—democracy and international good faith. It was religion, which taught "man his relationship to God," that gave "the individual a sense of his own dignity" and taught "him to respect himself by respecting his neighbors." These three institutions complemented and supported each other. They were linked and inseparable.

Roosevelt said that “Where freedom of religion has been attacked, the attack has come from sources opposed to democracy. Where democracy has been overthrown, the spirit of free worship has disappeared. And where religion and democracy have vanished, good faith and reason in international affairs have given way to strident ambition and brute force.” Any society that would relegate these institutions to the background “can find no place within it for the ideals of the Prince of Peace.” The United States would reject any such ordering and retain “its ancient faith.” There are times, he said, when men must be prepared to defend not only their homes “but the tenets of faith and humanity on which their churches, their governments and their very civilization are founded. The defense of religion, of democracy and of good faith among nations is all the same fight. To save one we must now make up our minds to save all.” Americans had learned that “God-fearing democracies of the world...cannot safely be indifferent to international lawlessness anywhere.”

And while the defense against “dictatorship” would cost Americans in the form of taxes and the risk of capital, dictatorship involved “costs which the American people will never pay: The cost of our spiritual values...The cost of freedom of religion.” Roosevelt would conclude with a quote from Lincoln’s 1862 Annual Message. “This generation” he said “will ‘nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth. . . .The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which if followed the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless’” (1939).

By January 3, 1940, when FDR delivered his 7th State of the Union message, world affairs (“the impact of war abroad”) dominated his speech. America was still nearly two years from being catapulted into the conflict and Roosevelt assured the

American people that he was not asking them to consent “to the sending of American youth to fight on the soil of Europe” or forget that the “overwhelming majority” of Americans hoped and expected that America would not become involved in “military participation” in those wars. But it was clear that international events impacted us domestically and Roosevelt said we should “look ahead” and envision a world dominated by dictators and nations imposing their will on other nations. “We must look ahead and see the kind of lives our children would have to lead if a large part of the rest of the world were compelled to worship a god imposed by a military ruler, or were forbidden to worship God at all...”

Roosevelt outlined a number of proposals including the continuation of progress on the domestic economic front. “The permanent security of America in the present crisis does not lie in armed force alone,” he said. “What we face is a set of world-wide forces of disintegration—vicious, ruthless, destructive of all the moral, religious and political standards which mankind, after centuries of struggle, has come to cherish most.” It was these “moral values” that had made America great and “we must actively and practically reassert our faith” (1940).

In his 1941 message Roosevelt would “thank God” for national unity. Roosevelt proclaimed this State of the Union address was “unique in our national history” because the “future of all the American republics” was in “serious danger.” This speech is sometimes referred to as the “Four Freedoms” speech. In it Roosevelt details the “four essential human freedoms.” These include: freedom of speech and expression; freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world; freedom from want and freedom from fear.

Roosevelt would also use two references from the Bible. “We must always be wary,” he said, “of those who with sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal preach the ’ism’ of appeasement.” This was an unattributed reference to I Corinthians 13:1 which states: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (KJV).

He would later note “As men do not live by bread alone, they do not fight by armaments alone.” Similar language is found in at least two places in the Bible: “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” found in Matthew 4:4 (KJV); “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” from Luke 4:4 (KJV). Again, the president did not cite the source of this language but surely knew that it would resonate with a population that was well-versed in the source and meaning of the phrase (1941).

In his 1942 address, delivered less than one month after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt would plainly state that we were engaged in a war of good against evil, a war in which it was the intent of Germany to replace “the Holy Bible and the Cross of Mercy” with “Mein Kampf and the swastika and the naked sword.” These were the stakes and the world was “too small to provide adequate ‘living room’ for both Hitler and God.” Our adversaries, Roosevelt said, knew that “victory for us means victory for religion.”

American objectives were clear: smashing militarism imposed by war lords, liberating the subjugated Nations; “establishing and securing freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear everywhere in the world.”

Sustaining us in this struggle was “a faith that goes back through all the years to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis: ‘God created man in His own image.’” We were fighting, he explained, “to be true to that divine heritage...fighting, as our fathers have fought, to uphold the doctrine that all men are equal in the sight of God.” Our opponents, on the other hand, were “striving to destroy this deep belief and to create a world in their own image—a world of tyranny and cruelty and serfdom” (1942).

Roosevelt would return to the Bible in his 1943 message to make a point about preventing any attempt to rearm in Germany, Japan or Italy after the war. Peace could only be maintained by preventing rearmament for these countries or “any other Nation which seeks to violate the Tenth Commandment—‘Thou shalt not covet.’” He was referring, of course, to the Decalogue as found in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21 (KJV).

In his last two messages Roosevelt would refer to the Deity stating that “Each and every one of us has a solemn obligation under God to serve this Nation in its most critical hour” (1944); stating that “We pray that we may be worthy of the unlimited opportunities that God has given us” and “There is an old and true saying that the Lord hates a quitter” (1945).

Roosevelt’s 12th and final State of the Union message was his longest at 8227 words. Three months later he died on April 12, 1945.

The importance of FDR on this study cannot be denied. The issues confronting Roosevelt when he assumed the presidency and his responses have been analyzed by numerous scholars and most consider FDR the first of the “modern presidents.” In terms of religious rhetoric, Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address (see Chapter II) and

Roosevelt's 1939 State of the Union message stand out. The American people faced dramatic challenges in 1939—an ongoing depression with economic turmoil a daily battle while observing a growing global threat to peace that would eventually require our resources and our blood. I would suggest that Roosevelt was acting as “Pastor-in-Chief” as he delivered a theological exploration of religion and the relationship between religion and democracy. He spoke of the need to save democracy in order to preserve freedom of religion and freedom to worship. Religion, democracy and good faith among nations were inseparable. If we wanted to save any of those foundations of our society then we must be prepared to save all three. That was our task. And our actions in pursuit of those goals would be applauded by the world but, more importantly perhaps, blessed by God.

Prior to FDR's 1939 message there were 149 Annual Messages. There have been a total of 73 since (including his 1939 address). Prior to his 1939 message the messages contained an average of 2.1 religious references. Since 1939 they have averaged 3.8. It would appear FDR's message impacted not only his contemporary audience but his successors as well. It may well have influenced future presidents and their use of religious rhetoric.

Truman and Eisenhower

Truman's first State of the Union message was the longest since Taft's message in 1912 at 17, 256 words. The message continued the trend that written messages were longer than those delivered orally. In addition to that written message Truman also submitted a budget message of 10,610 words with the State of the Union. Combined these messages comprise the second longest annual message with only Carter's 1981 message being longer.

Unlike most vice-president's who had ascended to the presidency following the death of their predecessor, Truman did not memorialize or pay tribute to FDR in his first State of the Union message. Less than a year had passed since the death of Roosevelt but Truman only mentions him twice: once to quote from Roosevelt's 1945 State of the Union message and once to reference a 1943 speech by Roosevelt asking Americans to "hold the line" on wages and prices.

His lack of reference to FDR in his first State of the Union is probably due to the fact that he had appeared before a joint session of Congress on April 16, 1945, the day after FDR's funeral. In that address he praised Roosevelt and stated: "In His infinite wisdom, Almighty God has seen fit to take from us a great man who loved, and was beloved by, all humanity." The policies of Roosevelt would continue, Truman said, including the prosecution of the war effort. Certainly there were those who sought an end to the conflict but "the laws of God and of man have been violated and the guilty must not go unpunished."

Our forefathers had risked their lives for "fundamental rights," Truman said, including "religious tolerance, political freedom and economic opportunity." Their faith would keep us strong. With the help of Congress and with "Divine guidance" we would find "the new passage to a far better world, a kindly and friendly world, with just and lasting peace."

Truman remarked that he had "in my heart a prayer." This prayer, he said, was, in the words of King Solomon:

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Quoting without attribution I Kings 3:9 [KJV].

His only request was “to be a good and faithful servant of my Lord and my people.”⁹⁶

In his first State of the Union message Truman repeats what he considers the “fundamental objectives” of American foreign policy. Initially pronounced in an October, 1945, speech in New York City, these fundamental objectives included the commitment that America would “continue to strive to promote freedom of expression and freedom of religion throughout the peace-loving areas of the world.” He would conclude his message noting the hardships endured by the American people in the recent past. In meeting those challenges, he said: “The plain people of this country found the courage and the strength, the self-discipline, and the mutual respect to fight and to win, with the help of our allies, under God” (1946).

Truman would consistently use religious rhetoric in his remaining seven State of the Union messages. His 28 references overall rank him ninth among presidents in average use of religious rhetoric in the State of the Union message. He would use the rhetoric to bolster policy decisions as when he discussed the creation of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights by stating that the Federal Government must lead the way to fight “racial and religious bigotry” (1947). He would state that “religious freedom” was cherished in American and “Our first goal is to secure fully the essential human rights of our citizens” (1948). America must “make every effort to extend the benefits of our democratic institutions to every citizen” as a duty placed upon them by “the religious ideals we profess.” This effort included establishing material conditions of life in which,

⁹⁶ John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted). Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12282>, accessed June 4, 2008.

“without exception, men may live in dignity, perform useful work, serve their communities and worship God as they see fit.” We were working “for a better life for all, so that all men may put to good use the great gifts with which they have been endowed by their Creator” (1950).

He would urge Congress to pass legislation to help the suffering refugees “of all faiths” (1948). In our efforts to deter Communism Truman gave reasons to fight “for peace.” He said that Americans had the “great responsibility of saving the basic moral and spiritual values of our civilization” (1952) “Atheistic communism” was threatening Europe, “a homeland of the great religious beliefs shared by many of our citizen’s” (1951).

In these struggles America was not alone. Truman asked the “Lord to strengthen us in our faith” and “give us wisdom to lead the peoples of the world in His ways of peace” (1947). He asked that Americans “rededicate ourselves to the faith in God that gives us confidence” to face the challenges ahead since the “basic source of our strength is spiritual” and that man was “created in the image of the Father of us all” (1948). We should ask for “divine guidance that in all we do we may follow the will of God” (1951) and trust in the “God of Peace” to “win the goals we seek” (1952).

In his 1949 message he noted how in his first appearance before Congress following the death of Roosevelt that he had quoted King Solomon’s prayer for “wisdom and the ability to govern his people as they should be governed.” [2 Chronicles 1:7-12 (KJV)]. “With the help from Almighty God” which had been acknowledged “at every turning point in our national life,” America could “perform the great tasks which He now

sets before us.” Truman was “confident that the Divine Power which has guided us...will not desert us now” (1949).

America, “by the grace of God,” was “a free and prosperous nation with greater possibilities for the future than any people ever had before in the history of the world.” We “should ask for continued strength and guidance from that Almighty Power who” had given us “such great opportunities for the good of mankind.” We should also be mindful of the founding “principles” of America that had “enshrined for us a principle of government, the moral imperative to do justice, and the divine command to men to love one another.” Truman was referencing the Biblical passage which states: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that he also love one another” John 13:34 (KJV). This “better life for all” would enable “all men” to “put to good use the great gifts with which they have been endowed by their Creator (1950).

In his last State of the Union address, Truman would discuss the Cold War as a struggle we did not seek, “God forbid,” and end his message with a now familiar concluding sentence when he asked “May God bless our country and our cause” (1953).

Dwight Eisenhower, like U.S. Grant, was unique among presidents. A career military officer, Eisenhower was a ‘non-politician’ who had not run for political office prior to 1952. As noted earlier his religious roots were deep and Eisenhower served during a period of significant religious activity in governmental actions. However, in his first and last State of the Union messages Eisenhower would use no religious rhetoric.

In his second State of the Union message (1954), Eisenhower said that America’s future was bright, there was no obstacle “she will not surmount” so long as “action and

aspiration humbly and earnestly seek favor in the sight of the Almighty.” In his subsequent messages, Eisenhower would quote from “the Psalmist” while using language from Psalms 8:5-6 (KJV) and contrasting the image of man in that scripture as opposed to the “soulless, animated machine to be enslaved, used and consumed by the state for its own glorification.” He would note that he had seen “a devout America, humble before God” in the American soldier and asserted that “Every citizen wanted to give full expression to his God-given talents and abilities” (1955).

In 1956 Eisenhower would give “grateful thanks to a kind Providence” for America’s many blessings and assert that the “State of the Union today demonstrates what can be accomplished under God.” America was involved in a “threefold movement” in the “march of science, the expanding economy, [and] the advance in collective security toward a just peace.” Progress in those areas could only be realized, however, if “it is more than matched by a continuing growth in the spiritual strength of the nation.” Part of the fundamental formula for individuals to achieve their “aspirations” included a good education. Good education, he said, was “the outgrowth of good homes, good communities, good churches, and good schools” (1956).

Eisenhower made the connection between religion and the success of our nation even more explicit in his 1957 message. Our founding principles were “proclaimed in the Constitution...and founded in devout religious convictions.” American commitment to the concepts embodied in the Declaration of Independence, a “Divine” purpose, required human “implementation.” The “compass” that steered our course was the concept “of the dignity of all men, alike created in the image of the Almighty.”

The future, Eisenhower asserted, belonged not to the “regimented atheistic state” but to the “God-fearing, peace-loving people of all the world” (1958). “Free men” would “carry forward” the “true promise of human progress and dignity” so long as we did not forget “that our nation was founded on the premise that all men are creatures of God’s making” (1959) and that the “steady purpose of our society is to assure justice, before God, for every individual” (1960). While America’s “miraculous progress and achievements” flowed from “adherence to principles and methods consonant with our religious philosophy” one day, “with faith in the Almighty,” humanity would “achieve the unity in freedom to which all men have aspired from the dawn of time” (1960).

Kennedy, LBJ and Nixon

With the election of the first Catholic president in 1960 there was a period of fourteen years when presidents rarely used religious rhetoric in the State of the Union. John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon all rank in the lowest 20% of presidential use of religious rhetoric in the State of the Union. Their combined total of 13 references is less than 11 individual presidents and represents only 25% of the total references employed by either President Reagan or President George W. Bush. Perhaps this lack of religious rhetoric is reflective of a reaction to the religious tenor of the 1950s. After Congress had adopted “In God We Trust” as the national motto and inserted “under God” into the Pledge of Allegiance there might not have been the need for presidents to use more religious rhetoric. Perhaps it reflects Kennedy’s desire to minimize religious controversy due to the issues surrounding his Catholicism in the 1960 election. Perhaps Nixon’s limited use can be traced to his membership in the Quaker religion. Both Nixon

and the other Quaker president (Hoover) used limited religious rhetoric. The answer may lie somewhere in between but is probably attributable to their “rhetorical signature” influenced by their individual religious background, contemporary political issues and circumstances.

Kennedy used a single reference in each of his three State of the Union addresses. In his first (1961) the only reference was contained in a quote he used from FDR’s final State of the Union when Roosevelt said: “We pray that we may be worthy of the unlimited opportunities that God has given us.” In his second message (1962) Kennedy said that America was in “the role of being the great defender of freedom in its hour of maximum danger.” In this “high endeavor” he said: “...may God watch over the United States of America.” In his final address in 1963 Kennedy noted the treacherous time confronting the nation but believed America had sailed for “175 years with those winds (the winds of change) at our back, and with the tides of human freedom in our favor.” He expressed “hope” in the future and would close with “thanks to Almighty God for seeing us through a perilous passage” and asked “His help anew in guiding the ‘Good Ship Union.’”

Lyndon Johnson used no religious rhetoric in his first (1964) or last (1969) State of the Union addresses. The seven references he used in his remaining four addresses included specific references to “God,” a quote from the Bible, a hopeful “prayer” and a mention of the Pope. In 1965 he stated that “Our nation was created to help strike away the chains of ignorance and misery and tyranny wherever they keep man less than God means him to be.” The State of the Union, Johnson reported, was “Free and restless,

growing and full of hope.” It would remain that way “while God is willing, and we are strong enough to keep the faith” (1965).

Even though we were “scarred by the weaknesses of man” we must “strive to ennoble the life of man on earth” with “whatever guidance God may offer us” (1966). When Johnson spoke the next year he said that America was going through a “time of testing...and a time of transition.” We faced problems at home and in Vietnam. We had faced problems before, Johnson said, and noted that the “transition is sometimes slow; sometimes unpopular; almost always very painful; and often quite dangerous.” In expressing his belief that we would overcome those difficulties he quoted a verse from the Bible and said: “We know that ‘man is born unto trouble’” (1967). The passage comes from Job 5:7 (KJV): “Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.”

While Johnson does not elaborate on his use of this passage, he appears to be referring to the story as told in the 5th chapter of Job. In that chapter Eliphaz reminds Job that no affliction comes by chance, nor should it be attributed to secondary causes. The difference between prosperity and adversity is not as clear as that between day and night, summer and winter; but it is according to the will and counsel of God. We must not attribute our afflictions to bad luck or misfortune, for they are from God; nor should we attribute our sins to fate, for they are from ourselves. Man is born in sin, and therefore born to trouble. Johnson apparently did not feel it necessary to relate the story of the verse but believed the majority of Americans would understand the connection without elaboration on his part.

In 1968 Johnson would say it was his “hope” and his “prayer” that peace talks could be established in Vietnam and, if they could, the “first order of business” would be

a cease-fire. In that passage he recounted a visit with “His Holiness the Pope” and stated that he shared the hope expressed by the Pope that both sides in the conflict would extend themselves in an effort to bring an end to the war.

Richard Nixon has been described as “a deeply spiritual young man” who once stated that the “impact of my Quaker heritage on my personality has been underestimated” (Aitken 1993, 46). Raised by a devout Quaker mother who would take her sons to four services on Sunday, Nixon’s great-grandmother, Elizabeth Milhous, was a well-known and highly sought after Quaker preacher. Although he would give “witness” and lead “extensive prayers in the East Whittier Friends Church” Nixon was very private in his religious beliefs and found it difficult to talk to anyone about his spiritual beliefs. Jonathan Aitken in a sympathetic biography of Nixon has commented that “Unlike most American politicians, [Nixon] developed an aversion to mentioning God or religion throughout his public career” (Aitken 1993, 57). But this does not mean Nixon lost his faith. Aitken recounts that “Throughout his life...he remained a practicing Christian . . .” dutifully attended “chapel at Duke University; . . . [was] a Sunday school teacher in his twenties; . . . read his Bible daily during his war service in the South Pacific; . . . discussed with his mother the possibility of becoming a Quaker minister; . . . developed a spiritual friendship with . . . Billy Graham . . . was the first President to hold Sunday services in the White House;” that he often prayed before major presidential journeys, during the Watergate crisis and that he had “knelt to pray with Henry Kissinger on the eve of his resignation” (Aitken 1993, 58).

In the election of 1960 John Kennedy’s Catholicism was a major issue. America had never elected a Catholic president and many thought that the previous Catholic

candidate, Al Smith, had lost a substantial number of votes due to his religion. Nixon appears to have refused to permit the religious issue to be a part of his official campaign. In an appearance on Meet the Press on September 11, 1960, Nixon stated that he intended to keep religion out of the campaign and that he had “issued orders to all of the people in [his] campaign not to discuss religion, not to raise it, not to allow anybody to participate in the campaign who does.” Personally, Nixon said that he would “decline to discuss religion.”⁹⁷ When he was approached by Peter Flanigan, a campaign aide, with suggestions on how they could stem the defection of traditionally Republican Catholic voters to Kennedy, Nixon instructed him not to “play the religious card under any circumstances whatever.” Flanigan reported that Nixon said: “I absolutely forbid you to do anything which suggests that my campaign has a religious bias to it” (Aitken 1993, 280).

Richard Nixon’s administration, of course, was consumed by controversy, impeachment proceedings and resignation. It is also notable in the fact that, of all the modern presidents, Nixon used religious rhetoric less frequently in his State of the Union messages. In two of his messages (1972 and 1973) Nixon would use no religious rhetoric. In the other three he would use a single reference in each.

In his first State of the Union message (1970), Nixon would lay out his plans for foreign policy including ending the war in Vietnam, a “new relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union” and Communist China. He discussed his plan for a

⁹⁷ Nixon's TV Remarks on Issue of Religion. (1960, September 12). *New York Times (1857-Current file)*, p. 19. Retrieved May 15, 2008, from ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2004) database. (Document ID: 99800907).

“New Federalism” and the need to reform the institutions of government and the welfare system. He concluded the address with the following: “May God give us the wisdom, the strength and, above all, the idealism to be worthy of that challenge, so that America can fulfill its destiny of being the world’s best hope for liberty, for opportunity, for progress and peace for all peoples” (1970).

His second address contained only what could be considered a limited reference of a religious nature when he asked the audience to “rise in silent prayer” for Senator Richard Russell, “one of the most magnificent Americans of all time,” who had died the day before (1971).

1974 would be the final year of Nixon’s presidency due to the scandal and impeachment proceedings due to the Watergate burglary and cover-up. Those matters had been increasingly difficult for Nixon to deal with in 1973 but when he delivered his State of the Union message on January 30, 1974, he vowed never to walk “away from the job that the people elected me to do.” He concluded his address with his belief that “...With the help of God, who has blessed this land so richly, with the cooperation of the Congress, and with the support of the American people, we can and we will make the year 1974 a year of unprecedented progress toward our goal of building a structure of lasting peace in the world and a new prosperity without war in the United States of America.” Seven months later he was no longer president.

Ford and Carter

Gerald Ford became the only president to take office without being elected either vice-president or president when Nixon resigned. The first person to be appointed vice-

president under the 25th Amendment Ford would serve less than a year in that capacity before becoming president.

Ford would use no religious rhetoric in his first message (1975) delivered just over five months after assuming the presidency. In his second address Ford spoke as America was beginning to celebrate the bicentennial. 1975 had been a difficult year for America but Ford said he saw a promising future for a resurgent America. Ford said he had “heard many inspiring Presidential speeches,” but the words he remembered best were spoken by Dwight D. Eisenhower: “America is not good because it is great; America is great because it is good.” While Ford did not attempt to define his conception of “good,” he went on to say: “President Eisenhower was raised in a poor but religious home in the heart of America. His simple words echoed President Lincoln’s eloquent testament that ‘right makes might.’ And Lincoln in turn evoked the silent image of George Washington kneeling in prayer at Valley Forge.” These were “magic memories” that linked “eight generations of Americans.” It could be “summed up” by the phrase “In God We Trust,” Ford said, and he encouraged Americans to “engrave it now in each of our hearts...” (1976).

Ford lost the 1976 election to Jimmy Carter. In his final State of the Union address he would reflect on his service and frame his emotions with religious rhetoric. Ford said that he prayed “the third century we are beginning [of American independence] will bring to all Americans, our children and their children’s children, a greater measure of individual equality, opportunity, and justice, a greater abundance of spiritual and material blessings, and a higher quality of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

He recounted becoming president in 1974 and that fact that he “asked for your prayers and went to work.” As he spoke of the twenty-nine months he had served as president he listed the accomplishments and activities of his administration. He had gained a new appreciation for the system of checks and balances and the separation of powers implemented by the Founders because even though it “...often results in difficulty and delay...it also places supreme authority under God, beyond any one person, any one branch, any majority great or small, or any one party.”

Ford would conclude his remarks with the statement: “My fellow Americans, I once asked you for your prayers, and now I give you mine: May God guide this wonderful country, its people, and those they have chosen to lead them. May our third century be illuminated by liberty and blessed with brotherhood, so that we and all who come after us may be the humble servants of thy peace. Amen.” He said good night and “God bless you” (1977).

Jimmy Carter was a devout Southern Baptist who attended church services regularly while president. Elected in the first presidential election following the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade*, he spoke openly about being ‘born again’ and the importance of faith in his personal life. He received support from evangelical Christians including strong support in the South. He spoke the language of religion in the campaign and survived a *Playboy* interview where he admitted that he had “lusted in his heart.” In his 1980 re-election campaign Carter would use a commercial that emphasized his religious faith. While the camera slowly panned over a Bible resting on a table next to a plaque that reads “O, God, thy sea is so great and my boat is so small,” the narrator delivers the following:

“Though he carefully observes our historic separation of church and state, Jimmy Carter is a deeply and clearly religious man. He takes the time to pray privately and with Rosalynn each day. Under the endless pressure of the Presidency, where decisions change and directions change, end even the facts change, this man knows that one thing remains constant: his faith.”⁹⁸

Carter’s use of religious rhetoric in the State of the Union, however, is limited. Perhaps he felt that the message was not an appropriate venue for too much of this rhetoric or perhaps he assumed his religious credentials were sufficient with the American people and he did not need to bolster them.

In his first message (1978), Carter mentioned the recent death of Hubert Humphrey and how Humphrey spoke of “reconciliation, rebuilding and rebirth.” Americans must rededicate themselves, Carter said, to “serving the common good.” We are a community whose individual fates were linked and whose “futures intertwined.” If we acknowledge that fact and work “in that spirit,” together, “as the Bible says, we can move mountains.” He was referencing without attribution I Corinthians 13:2 (KJV) which says: “If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” Or perhaps Matthew 17:20 (KJV): “And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”

⁹⁸ <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1980>, accessed March 20, 2009.

Carter would use no religious rhetoric in his second message (1979). His third would be delivered a little over two months after the November 4, 1979, taking of 50 American hostages in Iran. The only religious rhetoric Carter would use in this message was focused on the turmoil in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Soviets were attempted to subjugate a “fiercely independent and deeply religious people.” These actions, combined with the taking of the American hostages presented “a serious challenge to the United States of America” and were “threats to peace” (1980).

In Afghanistan the Soviet Union was “using its great military power against a relatively defenseless nation.” The outrage extended along religious lines because “The Moslem world is especially and justifiably outraged by this aggression against an Islamic people” (1980). He would refer to this action again in his last message as a “callous violation of international law” and as an attempt “to subjugate an independent, non-aligned Islamic people” (1981).

In a foreshadowing of current events in the region, Carter proclaimed what has become known as the Carter Doctrine: “Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.” But Carter recognized it was not merely a geographical consideration but also one with religious overtones. “We respect the faith of Islam,” he said, “and we are ready to cooperate with all Muslim countries” (1980).

Why would Carter, a devout Southern Baptist, use limited religious references in his State of the Union addresses? The explanation is not easily ascertained. Perhaps it is

due to the fact that Carter's religion had been reported so widely that he felt it was not necessary to bolster his pronouncements with religious references.

The “Great Awakening” in Presidential Rhetoric

American presidents have utilized religious rhetoric in the State of the Union messages at varying levels beginning with Washington's first. No period of time in our history has seen a group of presidents use religious rhetoric as frequently as those beginning with Ronald Reagan. In terms of frequency of use of religious rhetoric, the last four presidents rank in the top eleven overall, including three of the top four.

Ronald Reagan

Reagan was a staunch social conservative and many scholars credit conservative Christian groups with providing critical support for his candidacy. While some may complain that little progress was made on issues such as abortion or school prayer during Reagan's presidency, he certainly did not disappoint them in his use of rhetoric. Beginning with his first address in 1982 Reagan would use religious rhetoric in the State of the Union message more frequently than any other president.

In his first address Reagan noted “that private American groups have taken the lead in making January 30th a day of solidarity with the people of Poland” and that “the European Parliament has called for March 21st to be an international day of support for Afghanistan.” Reagan urged “all peace-loving peoples to join together on those days, to raise their voices, to speak and pray for freedom.” He promised the world a new “frankness” in public statements and worldwide broadcasts. He said: “. . . we've promised the world a season of truth—the truth of our great civilized ideas: individual liberty, representative government, the rule of law under God.” He told the story of

Jeremiah Denton a former POW who, upon his return, “caught sight of our flag, saluted it, said ‘God Bless America,’ and then thanked us for bringing him home.” He concluded his address with the now standard refrain “God bless America” (1982).

The following year Reagan would also use religious rhetoric to advocate specific policy proposals, a theme that he would use repeatedly throughout his presidency. Calling for tuition tax credits for parents who “want to send their children to private or religiously affiliated schools,” Reagan also proposed “a constitutional amendment to permit voluntary school prayer.” Reagan proclaimed that “God should never have been expelled from America’s classrooms in the first place.” He said that he “hope[d] and pray[ed] for a bipartisan spirit” and that America’s leadership in the world “came to us because of our own strength and because of the values which guide us as a society” including “freedom of religious choice.” He would close with “Thank you, and God bless you” (1983).

Reagan’s third State of the Union message was delivered at the start of a presidential election year and seemed designed to emphasize the accomplishments of his administration and rally supporters for the coming re-election effort (Kalb, et al 891). These efforts included mentioning issues targeting conservative voters, such as support for school prayer, opposition to abortion and a “rededication to values” (1984).

Reagan would start his 1984 address stating that the state of the union was improved over the eroded spirit of the past. Big government could not solve our problems and “For a time we forgot the American dream isn’t one of making government bigger; it’s keeping faith with the mighty spirit of free people under God.” Americans were ready for a “new beginning,” he said. “There was a hunger in the land for a

spiritual revival; if you will, a crusade for renewal.” The American economy was improving (“one of the best recoveries in decades”) and we should “Send away the handwringers and the doubting Thomases.” He was referring to a common characterization of the skepticism of the disciple Thomas found in John 20: 25-28 (KJV).

Of course there was still work to be done. Reagan reminded his audience “that many of our fellow countrymen are still out of work, wondering what will come of their hopes and dreams. Can we love America and not reach out to tell them: You are not forgotten; we will not rest until each of you can reach as high as your God-given talents will take you.”

Reagan would return to the issue of school prayer, stating: “And while I’m on this subject [of education], each day your Members observe a 200-year-old tradition meant to signify America is one nation under God. I must ask: If you can begin your day with a member of the clergy standing right here leading you in prayer, then why can’t freedom to acknowledge God be enjoyed again by children in every schoolroom across this land? America was founded by people who believed that God was their rock of safety. He is ours. I recognize we must be cautious in claiming that God is on our side, but I think it’s all right to keep asking if we’re on His side” (1984).

Symbolic rhetoric was also utilized by Reagan. In his State of the Union addresses Reagan liked to have guests in the gallery who could be introduced as a part of his speech. In 1984 he recognized Sergeant Stephen Trujillo who had participated in the invasion of Grenada and said “God bless you” to the young sergeant. He mentioned the “unsung heroes,” Americans (“single parents, couples, church and civic volunteers”) who worked to solve family and community problems. “They soothe our sorrow, heal our

wounds, calm our fears, and share our joy,” Reagan said. As an example of those individuals, he introduced Father Bruce Ritter, a Catholic priest who had founded Covenant House, a home for runaway, homeless and abused children.⁹⁹

In perhaps a preview of Reagan’s “Morning Again in America” re-election campaign theme, the president quoted Carl Sandburg who said, “I see America not in the setting sun of a black night of despair . . . I see America in the crimson light of a rising sun fresh from the burning, creative hand of God . . . I see great days ahead for men and women of will and vision.” Reagan concluded with “Let us be sure that those who come after will say of us . . . that in our time we did everything that could be done. We finished the race; we kept them free; we kept the faith.” He was, perhaps, recalling the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7 (KJV), “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” He would again end his address, as he did each of his State of the Union addresses, with the now familiar “God bless you, and God bless America” (1984).

In his first State of the Union address following his re-election, Reagan recounted progress that had been made in the last four years and asserted that “America [was] stronger because of the values that we hold dear.” This progress did not begin “in Washington, DC, but in the hearts of our families, communities, workplaces, and voluntary groups which, together, are unleashing the invincible spirit of one great nation under God.” Americans had, apparently, lost their guiding principles. Reagan said that “Of all the changes that have swept America the past 4 years, none brings greater promise than our *rediscovery* of the values of faith, freedom, family, work, and neighborhood.”

⁹⁹ Ritter, who also served on Attorney General Edwin Meese’s Commission of Pornography, would be accused of sexual improprieties leading to his removal as President of Covenant House. He resigned from the charity and the Franciscan order in 1990.

We were seeing “signs of renewal in increased attendance in places of worship; renewed optimism and faith in our future; love of country *rediscovered* by our young, who are leading the way. We’ve *rediscovered* that work is good in and of itself, that it ennoble us to create and contribute no matter how seemingly humble our jobs . . . we have *refound* our values” (emphasis added).

Reagan praised the Congress for passing the Equal Access legislation that mandated groups, including religious organizations, would have equal access to the use of public school facilities and again called for adoption of the school prayer amendment: “...no citizen need tremble, nor the world shudder, if a child stands in a classroom and breathes a prayer.”

Reagan’s religious rhetoric did not involve only domestic issues. Our foreign policy was also based on a belief of God’s intent for the peoples of the world. “Tonight,” Reagan said, “we declare anew to our fellow citizens of the world: Freedom is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few; it is the universal right of all God’s children.” Peace was “most secure where people live by laws that ensure free press, free speech, and freedom to worship, vote, and create wealth.” It was “our mission . . . to nourish and defend freedom and democracy . . . everywhere we can.”

He linked support for the “freedom fighters” in Nicaragua as opposing the “Sandinista dictatorship” that “persecutes its people, the church, and denies a free press” (1985)

Reagan would delay delivering his fifth State of the Union message (1986) due to the space shuttle Challenger disaster that had occurred on the date his address was originally scheduled to be delivered. His address to the nation on the morning of the

disaster and later at the memorial service was emblematic of the role of the president as “comforter-in-chief.” Similar roles have been performed by other presidents including Clinton at the Oklahoma City bombing memorial service and George W. Bush after the loss of the space shuttle Columbia. Reagan would also mention the tragedy in the State of the Union address.

Reagan spoke of “unfinished work” but proclaimed that “America is on the move.” What “brought America back” was the “quiet courage and common sense “of the American people and the “undying faith that in this nation under God the future will be ours; for the future belongs to the free.”

We were seeing a “renaissance in education” with rising test scores. But it “wasn’t government and Washington lobbies that turned education around; it was the American people who, in reaching for excellence, knew to reach back to basics.” We must continue the advance, Reagan said, “by supporting discipline in our schools, vouchers that give parents freedom of choice; and we must give back to our children their lost right to acknowledge God in their classrooms.”

Reagan would lament that “there is a wound in our national conscience” and assert that “America will never be whole as long as the right to life granted by our Creator is denied to the unborn.” He pledged that: “For the rest of my time, I shall do what I can to see that this wound is one day healed.”

Reagan would extend the rhetoric to the frontiers of science and proclaim that “physicists peering into the infinitely small realms of subatomic particles find reaffirmations of religious faith.” He did not elaborate what religious faiths were being reaffirmed by science.

Reagan would return to his theme that America could “enlarge the family of free nations if we will defend the unalienable rights of all God’s children to follow their dreams” and sent a message to “those imprisoned in regimes held captive, to those beaten for daring to fight for freedom and democracy—for their right to worship, to speak, to live, and to prosper in the family of free nations—we say to you tonight: You are not alone, freedom fighters.” His expanded definition of “freedom fighters” included those “in Afghanistan, in Angola, in Cambodia, and in Nicaragua.”

Reagan would again close his speech by recognizing guests in the gallery. Included in his recognition was a 12-year-old “child prodigy of gospel music,” Tyrone Ford. “With God as your composer,” the president told Tyrone, “your music will be the music of angels” (1986).

Reagan’s sixth address (1987) would be delivered during the Iran-Contra affair which had come to light in late 1986. It was a “major regret” for Reagan and he acknowledged “serious mistakes were made” even though the “goals were worthy.” In his section of the speech dealing with foreign policy, Reagan asserted that democracy was “on the march in Central and South America but that “Communist Nicaragua is the odd man out—suppressing the church, the press, and democratic dissent and promoting subversion in the region.”

Reagan said that we had to “stop suppressing the spiritual core of our national being. Our nation could not have been conceived without divine help. Why is it that we can build a nation with our prayers, but we can’t use a schoolroom for voluntary prayer? The 100th Congress of the United States should be remembered as the one that ended the expulsion of God from America’s classrooms.”

Reagan would close this address with extended remarks related to the Constitution, “the impassioned and inspired vehicle by which we travel through history.” Our Constitution, Reagan said, “grew out of the most fundamental inspiration of our existence: that we are here to serve Him by living free” and using our “gifts for good and generous purposes . . . not just for ourselves and for our children but for all mankind” (1987).

In his seventh and final State of the Union address, Reagan returned to themes of American values (work, family, religion and “the love of freedom that God places in each of us and whose defense He has entrusted in a special way to this nation”) and “reminded us that spiritual values alone are essential to our nation’s health and vigor.”

He would also repeat his call for a school prayer amendment. “Congress,” he said, “opens its proceedings each day, as does the Supreme Court, with an acknowledgment of the Supreme Being . . . Yet we are denied the right to set aside in our schools a moment each day for those who wish to pray. I believe Congress should pass our school prayer amendment.”

Reagan also referred to “a family issue that we must have the courage to confront”—abortion. He called on America—“a good nation, a moral people”—to consider “the terrible cost of abortion on demand.” In some of his strongest language on the issue, he stated that proponents of “a woman’s right to control of her own body” could not “deny that now medical evidence confirms the unborn child is a living human being entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” He called for an elimination of Federal funding for abortion and a human life amendment. He did, however, note there should be an exception where the unborn child threatens the life of the mother since

“[o]ur Judeo-Christian tradition recognizes the right of taking a life in self-defense” (1988).

George H. W. Bush

Following his election in 1988, George H.W. Bush became the first sitting vice president to ascend to the presidency since Martin Van Buren in 1836. He delivered a speech to a joint session of Congress and the American people on February 9, 1989, that was not an official State of the Union message. This address, delivered less than one month after his inauguration, was designed to lay out his budget priorities. In this address Bush said that he believed “family and faith represent the moral compass of the Nation” and that he would “work to make them strong.” Bush used a quote of Benjamin Franklin to emphasize the importance of faith: ‘If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, can a great nation rise without His aid?’” Franklin had used that quote in a June 28, 1787, speech to the Constitutional Convention proposing that prayers be given before the start of their sessions each day.¹⁰⁰

Faith and religion were important domestically and “around the globe” and Bush asserted that America “must continue to be freedom’s best friend.” Included in that pledge was the commitment that “we must stand firm for self-determination and democracy in Central America, including in Nicaragua.” Bush said it was his “strongly held conviction that when people are given the chance they inevitably will choose a free press, freedom of worship, and certifiably free and fair elections.”

He would close with “God bless you, and God bless America” (1989).

In 1990, Bush gave his State of the Union following a historical year in international developments full of what Bush termed “remarkable events.” The Berlin

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.franklinpapers.org/franklin/framedVolumes.jsp>, accessed May 19, 2008.

Wall had fallen in November and the Soviet Union was crumbling. Countries in Eastern Europe were being reshaped as democratic institutions. “The idea called America” was alive in those events and Bush told a story where he said: “A worker, dressed in grimy overalls” addressed “a workers’ rally, in a place called Branik on the outskirts of Prague.” The worker started his speech, Bush said, with the “words of a distant revolution: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, and that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.’”

Bush concluded his address with a section in which he asked “the grandparents out there...our living link with the past,” to tell their grandchildren the “story of struggles waged at home and abroad, of sacrifices freely made for freedom’s sake.” He urged parents to tell their children “of faith and family” and that “we are one nation under God.” And he closed with “God bless all of you, and may God bless this great nation, the United States of America” (1990).

Bush’s 1991 State of the Union message was delivered in the midst of Operation Desert Storm, the military effort to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Coalition forces had started bombing Iraq on January 17th—twelve days before the State of the Union address. The message was dominated by discussion of the conflict but Bush also acknowledged the worsening economic conditions in America. The only religious rhetoric he would use in this address would be the now standard closing: “May God bless the United States of America” (1991).

In his final State of the Union address in 1992, Bush would return to a pattern of religious rhetoric consistent with his first two addresses. The speech was delivered

during what Bush expressed as “a dramatic and deeply promising time in our history and in the history of man on Earth.” Over the past 12 months the world had witnessed “changes of almost Biblical proportions.” He included in that assessment what he termed the communism had “died” that year. This was “the biggest thing that has happened in the world in my life, in our lives . . . By the grace of God, America won the cold war.” As a result America could begin to lower defense spending and “stop making the sacrifices we had to make when we had an avowed enemy that was a superpower.”

On the domestic front Bush would again address the economy and call for a “90 day moratorium” on federal regulations that “could hinder growth,” a new transportation bill that would create jobs, a change in the tax withholding tables and revisions in the IRA law. He also proposed lowering the capital gains tax and compared those who opposed the reduction to “the old definition of the Puritan who couldn't sleep at night, worrying that somehow, someone somewhere was out having a good time” (1992).

William Jefferson Clinton

Like his predecessor, Bill Clinton gave a speech to a joint session of Congress in his first month following his inauguration. The speech, which outlined his economic plans and a program to reduce the federal deficit, was not officially a State of the Union address but can be characterized as a speech that served the same function. The speech was referred to by the media as a “state of the union address” (Kalb et al. 2007, 966).

In his 1993 address Clinton would urge a “new direction” for America with proposals to reform health care, “end welfare as we know it,” and protect middle income taxpayers while raising taxes for the upper 1.2 % of income earners. He would use only a

single reference of religious rhetoric when he concluded the speech with “God Bless America.”

One example of rhetoric that may have a religious foundation but has come to lack religious connotation is the use of the phrase ‘sacred cow.’ While it can be argued that the term comes from the Hindu belief that cows are sacred creatures and they are not to be harmed, the phrase has become a popular way to denote something or someone that is untouchable or shouldn’t be disturbed. So, for example, when President Clinton uses the phrase in his first address to the Congress on the goals of his administration to refer to the fact that budget cuts must be made without regard to special programs dear to individual members. His use of the phrase was not coded as religious rhetoric for purposes of this study.

When Clinton christened his new approach to government the New Covenant in his third State of the Union Address he certainly evokes, for some, the New Covenant as found in the Bible (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New covenant is a covenant made with the nation of Israel which speaks about the blessing aspect which is detailed in the Abrahamic covenant. In this covenant, God promises to forgive sin and there will be a universal knowledge of the Lord (verse 34). It even appears that the nation of Israel will have a special relationship with their God (verse 33). For this reason, Clinton’s use of the word “Covenant” was coded as religious rhetoric.

In 1994 Clinton would increase his use of religious rhetoric with a total of seven references. Early in his speech he paid tribute to former Speaker Tip O’Neill who had died approximately three weeks prior to Clinton’s address. Clinton said that O’Neill was “smiling down on us for the first time from the Lord’s gallery.” He would later recognize

former Reagan press secretary Jim Brady who was wounded in the attempted assassination of Reagan. Brady and his wife had become staunch gun control advocates and Congress had passed gun control legislation bearing his name. Clinton thanked him for being present and said “God Bless you, sir.”

Clinton would state that we needed to “renew” America but that “We can’t renew our country unless more of us—I mean, all of us—are willing to join the churches and the other good citizens, people like all the ministers I’ve worked with over the years or the priests and the nuns I met at Our Lady of Help in east Los Angeles or my good friend Tony Campollo in Philadelphia, unless we’re willing to work with people like that, people who are saving kids, adopting schools, making streets safer.”

Use of the word ‘angel’ can imply both a religious and secular connotation. For while it can certainly have a connection to the Bible and Christianity, it can also be defined as a spirit that protects and offers guidance or refer to a kind person. So when President Clinton refers to the ‘better angels of our nature’ it may not necessarily be in a religious context. It does, however, evoke memories of language from Lincoln’s first inaugural address. Clinton used the phrase to refer to Americans being “true to our spirit, facing facts, coming together, [and] bringing hope” after a number of natural disasters. For this reason two references in Clinton’s second State of the Union Address to “angels” were coded as religious rhetoric.

Clinton would conclude with the statement that the “state of our Union” was “growing stronger, but it must be stronger still. With your help, and God’s help, it will be. Thank you and God bless America” (1994).

Clinton's 1995 address would be his first since the Republicans had taken control of the House and Senate in the 1994 midterm elections. Clinton's speech ran eighty-two minutes which made it the longest State of the Union address ever delivered orally (Kalb et al. 2007, 990). In terms of religious rhetoric, the 1995 address also represents the address with the most references by Clinton with a total of 13.

Clinton quoted from the Declaration of Independence section that asserted that the "Creator" had endowed men with "certain unalienable Rights" and that "every person in this country still believes" in that creed. He referred to "God-given potential" and "God-given talents."

Clinton used a significant portion of his address to "say a special word to our religious leaders." He said that he was "proud of the fact the United States has more houses of worship per capita than any country in the world." Religious leaders could "ignite their congregations to carry their faith into action." Religious leaders and their congregations could "make all the difference" and they had "a role in the New Covenant."

In the section of his speech where Clinton recognized guests in attendance he singled out "two folks I've had the honor of meeting and getting to know a little bit, the Reverend John and the Reverend Diana Cherry of the AME Zion Church in Temple Hills, Maryland." Ministers at "one of the three or four biggest churches in the entire United States," Clinton stated that "the special focus of their ministry is keeping families together." Clinton also stated that he had visited their church.

Clinton concluded by stating that "Responsibility, opportunity and citizenship" were the virtues "by which we can fulfill ourselves...and ...also fulfill the eternal

promise of this country.” In a passage that was Biblically based, Clinton said: “We all gain when we give, and we reap what we sow.” There are a number of similar references in the Bible including Galatians 6:7 which says: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall be also reap” [KJV]. He closed with “Thank you, and God bless you all” (1995).

Clinton’s 1996 address stressed the roles we all play, including “our churches and synagogues,” to help children “make the most of their lives and their God-given capacities.” He applauded the “work of religious groups” and said he was confident that when Americans work together “in their homes, their schools, their churches, their synagogues, their civic groups, their workplace, they can meet any challenge.” Americans faced “threats” that must be addressed, he said, including religious hatred.

Clinton’s 1997 address was given approximately three weeks after he had been sworn in for a second term. As he noted in his speech, Clinton’s 1997 State of the Union message was “the first State of the Union carried live in video over the Internet.”

Education was his top priority and he mentioned the strong economy. But there was “unfinished business.” He acknowledged that welfare reform had been passed and challenged “every religious congregation, every community nonprofit, every business to hire someone off welfare.”

Clinton would state that people all over the world “were being torn asunder by racial, ethnic, and religious conflicts that fuel fanaticism and terror.” We were not immune from those ills at home. “We still see evidence of abiding bigotry and intolerance in ugly words and awful violence, in burned churches and bombed buildings,” Clinton said. “We must fight against this, in our country and in our hearts.”

As an illustration of this intent Clinton told a story related to his inauguration. He said that just “a few days before my second Inauguration, one of our country’s best known pastors, Reverend Robert Schuller,” suggested that he read Isaiah 58:12. He quoted the verse which says: “Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.” Clinton said that he placed his hand on this verse at the time of his swearing in “for no matter what our differences in our faiths, our backgrounds, our politics, we must all be repairers of the breach” (1997).

Clinton’s 1998 address was given at a time of personal controversy for the president. He had been accused in the previous week that he had an affair with a former White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, and that he had asked her to lie about it. There was already speculation that Clinton would be impeached or forced to resign. Clinton did not address the growing controversy but focused on a strong economy and proposed several new programs. His use of religious rhetoric was limited to a declaration that America should “ratify the ethical consensus of the scientific and religious communities and ban the cloning of human beings.” And he closed with “God bless you, and God bless the United States” (1998).

Clinton’s next State of the Union message would be delivered the month after the House of Representatives had voted to impeach him on charges related to his affair with Lewinsky. The single reference of religious rhetoric Clinton used in his 1999 address was a variation on the common “God Bless America” ending that has become familiar for presidents to use. Clinton concluded his speech with: “My fellow Americans, this is our moment. Let us lift our eyes as one Nation, and from the mountaintop of this American

Century, look ahead to the next one, asking God's blessing on our endeavors and on our beloved country" (1999).

Clinton's final State of the Union address broke his previous record and became the longest address ever delivered orally at ninety minutes (Kalb et al 2007, 1053).

Clinton declared the state of the union was "the strongest it has ever been."

Clinton said that we must pledge that "every child will begin school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed. Every family will be able to succeed at home and at work, and no child will be raised in poverty. We will meet the challenge of the aging of America. We will assure quality, affordable health care, at last, for all Americans. We will make America the safest big country on Earth. We will pay off our national debt for the first time since 1835. We will bring prosperity to every American community. We will reverse the course of climate change and leave a safer, cleaner planet. America will lead the world toward shared peace and prosperity and the far frontiers of science and technology. And we will become at last what our Founders pledged us to be so long ago: One Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

On issues of foreign policy Clinton said that America "should be proud of our role in bringing the Middle East closer to a lasting peace, building peace in Northern Ireland, working for peace in East Timor and Africa, promoting reconciliation between Greece and Turkey and in Cyprus, working to defuse these crises between India and Pakistan, in defending human rights and religious freedom." But we also had a responsibility to the world economy. "In a world where over a billion people live on less than a dollar a day," Clinton said, "we also have got to do our part in the global endeavor to reduce the debts

of the poorest countries, so they can invest in education, health care, and economic growth. That's what the Pope and other religious leaders have urged us to do."

Domestically, "we should do more to help Americans help each other. First, we should help faith-based organizations to do more to fight poverty and drug abuse and help people get back on the right track . . . Second, we should support Americans who tithe and contribute to charities but don't earn enough to claim a tax deduction for it." Clinton said he was proposing "new tax incentives that would allow low and middle income citizens who don't itemize to get that deduction. It's nothing but fair, and it will get more people to give."

America was a diverse nation and we should "do more than just tolerate our diversity; we should honor it and celebrate it." Clinton quoted a "distinguished scientist" and said that "regardless of race," humans are "genetically 99.9 percent the same." This meant that "Modern science has confirmed what ancient faiths have always taught: the most important fact of life is our common humanity" (2000).

George W. Bush

George W. Bush would be elected in the controversial 2000 election against Al Gore. Raised in the Episcopal Church, Bush would join the Methodist Church after his marriage. Bush has subsequently referred to himself as a "proud Methodist."¹⁰¹ In his campaign biography, *A Charge to Keep: My Journey to the White House*, published in 1999, Bush describes himself as a "man who drifted until middle age, when Billy Graham 'planted a mustard seed' in his soul and helped turn his life around" (Lincoln 2004, 22). The book does not point to a single "born-again moment" but describes a process that included his decision to stop drinking alcohol, Bible study and a recommitment to God,

¹⁰¹ Dart, John, "Bush, 'proud Methodist,' Opens a Door," *Christian Century*, May 31, 2005, pp. 12-13.

church and family. The following year Bush would assume a major role in his father's 1988 presidential campaign.

One of his responsibilities in his father's campaign was to serve as an advisor and liaison with the Religious Right. In this role Bush was "coached and assisted" by Doug Wead, an Assemblies of God minister and good friend of Jim and Tammy Faye Baker. Wead introduced Bush to influential people from the evangelical community and "taught him to win their support by showing he shared the values and spoke their language." Wead told Bush to "signal early and signal often" and urged that the candidate's speeches be laced with Biblical allusions that would appeal to the religious community. The elder Bush would not use religious rhetoric in any significant way but it was a lesson that was taken to heart by the son and is illustrated by his subsequent rhetoric (Lincoln 2004, 22). Wead has described his advice in this way:

"Then, I had to share language, because every subculture has its own nomenclature, its own language, its own style. You can be out on the street and someone can just put one word in front of another word, and you instantly know where they're from. The same is true with the evangelical subculture."¹⁰²

George W. Bush's presidency has been pronounced by *Newsweek* as the "most resolutely 'faith-based' in modern times"¹⁰³ and proclaimed by historian Arthur Schlesinger as the "first faith-based administration in American history."¹⁰⁴ In terms of his use of religious rhetoric his presidency certainly resembles Reagan's more so than that of his father. In his eight State of the Union addresses Bush⁴³ uses 57 references of religious rhetoric, a total larger than any other president in their combined State of the

¹⁰² <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jesus/interviews/wead.html>, accessed May 22, 2008.

¹⁰³ Ribuffo, Leo P., "George W. Bush and the Latest Evangelical Menace," *Dissent*, Fall 2006, pp. 42-49.

¹⁰⁴ Schlesinger, Arthur, Jr. and Martin Marty, "A Faith-Based Presidency," *NPQ: New Perspectives Quarterly*, Winter 2005, Vol 22, Issue 1 (pp. 20-24).

Union messages. His average of 7.1 references per address is second only to Reagan's average of 7.4 (Reagan delivered only seven State of the Union addresses containing a total of 52 religious references). In each of his addresses Bush would close with some variation of "God Bless America." He would use a more familiar "May God Bless" (2002), "May God bless America (2005, 2006), a simple "God bless" (2001, 2007), "May God continue to bless the United States of America [or simply "America"] (2003, 2004), and, in his last address, "God Bless America" (2008).

His first address to Congress took place a little more than a month after his first inaugural. Although not technically a State of the Union message Bush used the occasion to lay out a long list of priorities for his administration. In his first address Bush proposed increasing funding for medical research "which gives hope to many who struggle with serious disease," and said: "Our prayers tonight are with one of your own who is engaged in his own fight against cancer, a fine Representative, and a good man, Congressman Joe Moakley."

Bush would also recommend a "Federal compassion capital fund" and proposed allowing faith-based groups to apply for and receive federal grant monies. In discussing his proposal to allow "...all taxpayers, whether they itemize or not, to deduct their charitable contributions," Bush stated that government could not "be replaced by charities or volunteers" and that "Government should not fund religious activities." He would close his address with "Good night and God bless" (2001).

The 2002 State of the Union would be delivered just four and one-half months after the attacks of September 11th. Even though Bush said "our Nation is at war; our economy is in recession; and the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers," he

declared that “the state of our Union has never been stronger.” Those attacks and the subsequent military action in Afghanistan dominated the address. Bush told a number of anecdotes related to the events of the last four months including a little boy who left his football with a note for his father who had died in the World Trade Center at a New York memorial: “Dear Daddy, please take this to heaven. I don’t want to play football until I can play with you again some day.” He said that “many have discovered again that even in tragedy—especially in tragedy—God is near.” He referred to North Korea, Iran and Iraq “and their terrorist allies” as “an axis of evil.”

On numerous occasions Bush mentioned the “Islamic world,” “the Islamic ‘street’”, and referred to “Islam’s own rich history.” He proposed doubling the size of the Peace Corps over the next 5 years, and asking them to join “a new effort to encourage development and education and opportunity in the Islamic world.”

America would “always stand firm for the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance,” Bush said, and that we would “take the side of brave men and women who advocate these values around the world, including the Islamic world...” He would conclude his address with “Thank you all. May God bless” (2002).

When Bush delivered his address in 2003 the nation was on the brink of war with Iraq. Much of the address would focus on making the case for military action but he would also seek a \$726 billion tax cut, a prescription-drug benefit for the Medicare system and billions of dollars to combat AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean (Kalb et al. 2007, 1087). In making the case for war Bush would assert: “The British Government

has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.” The statement turned out to be false and the resulting controversy would help fuel much of the debate related to the lead up to the war and the use, or misuse, of intelligence as justification for the war.

One of the goals Bush announced in his address was “to apply the compassion of America to the deepest problems of America...the homeless and the fatherless, the addicted...” The need is great, he said: “Yet there’s power, wonder-working power, in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people.” These words were reminiscent of a hymn written by Lewis E. Jones in 1899 “Power in the Blood.” The chorus of the hymn includes similar language:

There is power, power, wonder working power
In the blood of the Lamb;
There is power, power, wonder working power
In the precious blood of the Lamb.

It was not the first time Bush had used the words of a hymn in an official communication. Shortly after taking office as Governor of Texas, Bush sent a memo to his staff which makes reference to a painting then hanging in his office, a portrait entitled “A Charge to Keep.” The reason he mentioned it, he said, was because “the painting is based upon the Charles Wesley hymn *A Charge to Keep I Have*.” This was one of the hymns sang at the church service preceding the inaugural services. Bush said he was “particularly impressed by the second verse of this hymn” and quoted the stanza in the memo:

“To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill;
O may it all my powers engage to do my Master’s will”

This was “our mission,” the governor said and that the “verse captures our spirit.” He urged them to take a look at the painting when they came into his office and be reminded of “the message of Charles Wesley that we serve One greater than ourselves.”¹⁰⁵

Regarding his domestic agenda, Bush urged Congress to pass his “Faith-Based Initiative and the Citizen Service Act, to encourage acts of compassion that can transform America, one heart and one soul at a time.” One ongoing problem facing America was addiction and he stressed that America was “blessed with recovery programs that do amazing work.” One of them was located at the Healing Place Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Bush said. He quoted a man in the program who said, “God does miracles in people’s lives, and you never think it could be you.”

While the military action Bush had taken and would soon take was designed to protect America, Bush said Americans “know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation.” But this was not simply an American policy since the “liberty we prize is not America’s gift to the world, it is God’s gift to humanity.” In pursuing these objectives Americans had “faith in ourselves, but not in ourselves alone.” Bush sought guidance from God in this effort and said: “We do not know--we do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life and all of history.” He concluded with “And may God continue to bless the United States of America” (2003).

Entering the 2004 election year Bush would focus on national security and the war against terrorism in his State of the Union address. He claimed progress in the fight against terrorism, in Afghanistan and in Iraq. He mentioned that many leaders with terrorist ties had been killed or captured including Saddam Hussein. He also mentioned

¹⁰⁵ A facsimile of the memo is attached in Appendix C.

the massive tax cuts implemented during his presidency (which he said should be made permanent), the No Child Left Behind law and the addition of a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

Addressing whether democracy was possible in the Middle East, Bush said “it is mistaken and condescending to assume that whole cultures and great religions are incompatible with liberty and self-government. I believe that God has planted in every human heart the desire to live in freedom.”

Americans were living in “a time of great change in our world, in our economy, in science and medicine.” But despite these changes “some things endure: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity, respect for differences of faith and race.” These values, “the values we try to live by” did not change, Bush said, and they were “instilled in us by fundamental institutions such as families and schools and religious congregations.”

Bush would also touch on the issue of gay marriage, an issue important to conservatives and one that would play a role in the upcoming elections as conservative groups across the country were successful in getting a number of ballot initiatives prohibiting gay marriage on state ballots. The debate was important, Bush said, but so was the way the debate was conducted. Bush stated that the “same moral tradition that defines marriage also teaches that each individual has dignity and value in God’s sight.”

In addition to this issue, he said, it was also important “to strengthen our communities by unleashing the compassion of America’s religious institutions.” Echoing his efforts to open additional funding to faith-based organizations, Bush said that “Religious charities of every creed are doing some of the most vital work in our country:

mentoring children, feeding the hungry, taking the hand of the lonely.” Despite their efforts and success government “has often denied social service grants and contracts to these groups, just because they have a cross or a Star of David or a crescent on the wall.” He noted one of his first acts as president was to issuing an Executive Order opening federal grant competition (“billions of dollars”) to faith-based charities. He asked Congress to codify that action into law “so people of faith can know that the law will never discriminate against them again.”

Americans could move forward in “confidence and faith” because we “can trust in that greater power who guides the unfolding of the years. And in all that is to come, we can know that His purposes are just and true” (2004).

Bush’s 2005 State of the Union was delivered approximately two weeks after he was sworn in for his second term as president. Bush said that he had earned “political capital” in the campaign and intended “to spend it.” He presented a number of items to Congress including a plan to partially privatize social security, supported a Constitutional marriage amendment, proposed tax reform and changes in the immigration system. He also touched on the ongoing and increasingly unpopular war in Iraq and some of the themes he mentioned in his second inaugural address about the importance of spreading freedom throughout the world (Kalb et al. 2007, 1107).

In terms of religious rhetoric, Bush would use only two references—the lowest number for any of his eight addresses. Touching again on the issue of same sex marriage Bush said he supported a “constitutional amendment to protect the institution of marriage” for the “good of families, children, and society.” Using language that

resonated with conservatives Bush said marriage was a “sacred institution and the foundation of society” that “should not be re-defined by activist judges.”

Like previous generations of Americans, our “generation has dreams of its own,” and we pursued those dreams “with confidence.” Bush said: “The road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable—yet we know where it leads: It leads to freedom.” And he concluded with: “Thank you, and may God bless America” (2005).

When Bush delivered his 2006 State of the Union address he was facing growing erosion in his approval rating due to a number of factors. The war in Iraq was increasingly unpopular. The administration’s response to the Gulf region following Hurricane Katrina was perceived by many as, at best, substandard and some believed it was callous and racist. Scooter Libby, Vice-President Cheney’s chief of staff was embroiled in scandal and had been indicted by a federal grand jury the previous October.

In his address Bush would again cast our struggle in the Middle East as having religious overtones. He would refer to one of our enemies in the war against terror as “radical Islam—the perversion by a few of a noble faith into an ideology of terror and death.” We could not allow “radical Islam to work its will, by leaving an assaulted world to fend for itself” or “we would signal to all that we no longer believe in our own ideals or even in our own courage.”

Liberty, Bush said, “is the future of every nation in the Middle East because liberty is the right and hope of all humanity.” This included Iran, “a nation now held hostage by a small clerical elite that is isolating and repressing its people.”

Americans are a compassionate people, Bush said, and we “show compassion abroad because Americans believe in the God-given dignity and worth of a villager with

HIV/AIDS or an infant with malaria or a refugee fleeing genocide or a young girl sold into slavery.” Our compassion also extended to domestic issues and Bush pledged to renew the fight against HIV/AIDS in America, “a nationwide effort, working closely with African American churches and faith-based groups, to deliver rapid HIV tests to millions, end the stigma of AIDS, and come closer to the day when there are no new infections in America.”

Domestically, Bush said many Americans, especially parents “still have deep concerns about the direction of our culture...” and were “...discouraged by activist courts that try to redefine marriage.” Bush also called on Congress to “pass legislation to prohibit the most egregious abuses of medical research: Human cloning in all its forms; creating or implanting embryos for experiments; creating human-animal hybrids; and buying, selling, or patenting human embryos. Human life is a gift from our Creator, and that gift should never be discarded, devalued, or put up for sale” (2006).

In addressing the ongoing war in Iraq and the Middle East in his 2007 address, Bush would continue to cast it in terms relative to religion. He referred to Al Qaida and its followers as “Sunni extremists” and the “Islamist radical movement.” There was also escalating danger from “Shi’a extremists who are just as hostile to America and are also determined to dominate the Middle East.” The groups, “Shi’a and Sunni extremists” were “different faces of the same totalitarian threat.” “Radical Shi’a elements” received support from Iran. Al Qaida and other Sunni extremists had blown up “one of the most sacred places in Shi’a Islam, the Golden Mosque of Samarra...a Muslim house of prayer.”

Bush would introduce former professional basketball player Dikembe Mutombo, a Congolese-American, seated in the gallery and quoted a friend who had said: “Mutombo believes that God has given him this opportunity to do great things.” Bush would also mention ailing Senator Tim Johnson and Congressman Charlie Norwood and said that “we pray for” their “recovery and speedy return.”

In closing Bush said: “See you next year. Thank you for your prayers” (2007).

George W. Bush would deliver his final State of the Union address on January 28, 2008. He would take a somewhat contentious stance and promised to veto any measure that raised taxes or an appropriations bill that did not “cut the number and cost of earmarks in half.”

Bush used religious rhetoric when discussing two different policy matters. On each occasion he used the language of “faith-based” programs. Bush thanked Congress for “the DC Opportunity Scholarships”—a school voucher program—which, he said had given “more than 2,600 of the poorest children in our Nation’s Capital...new hope at a faith-based or other non-public school.” Faith-based groups, Bush said, were “bringing hope to pockets of despair, with newfound support from the Federal Government” and he asked Congress to permanently extend charitable choice legislation “to help guarantee equal treatment of faith-based organizations when they compete for Federal funds.” He would end this final address with: “God bless America” (2008).

Analysis

Use of religious rhetoric in State of the Union messages has increased

The first hypothesis to be examined is whether the actual use of religious rhetoric has increased since Washington. As indicated in Chapter II, the overall use of religious

rhetoric has increased in Inaugural addresses. As to State of the Union messages the answer also appears to be in the affirmative.

As illustrated in Chart XI (at page 152) the trend has been for presidents to increase their use of religious rhetoric similar to the increased usage in the Inaugural addresses (see Chart II on page 117).

If we divide the State of the Union messages into periods of approximately 20-32 messages we can also see a pattern of use. As demonstrated by the following Table 1, there was a fairly steady use of religious rhetoric in the periods from Washington to Andrew Jackson. The average for the second period (Madison 1809 to Jackson 1836) includes John Quincy Adams and Jackson who used religious rhetoric more than their predecessors. Adams average of 4.5 references of religious rhetoric ranks him fifth overall and Jackson's 3.6 ranks him 8th overall among presidential use of religious rhetoric in the State of the Union messages.

The period leading up to the Civil War through Andrew Johnson's 1868 address established a new standard for religious rhetoric in the State of the Union message with an average of 3.1 references per address. Although we often think of Lincoln and his use of religious rhetoric in his inaugural address and many of his other speeches, his use of religious rhetoric in the State of the Union places him in the middle of presidential rankings in this regard. This period owes the increase more to James Buchanan in his four addresses from 1857-1860 than to Lincoln. Buchanan's average of 6 references per address ranks his third all-time in this category.

Average usage remains fairly constant until 1901. There was a noticeable drop in religious rhetoric in the period from Teddy Roosevelt through Herbert Hoover (average

use 1.3 references). This period includes Taft who is the only president to deliver all of his State of the Union addresses without a single reference of religious rhetoric.

Interestingly these presidents were all Republicans.

Table 1. Cycles of Religious Rhetoric in State of the Union Messages

	PERIOD	NUMBER OF ADDRESSES	AVERAGE USE	RANGE
1	Washington (1790) to Jefferson (1808)	20	1.3	0-3
2	Madison (1809) to Jackson (1836)	28	2.5	0-9
3	Van Buren (1837) to A. Johnson (1868)	32	3.1	1-8
4	Grant (1869) to McKinley (1900)	32	2.5	0-10
5	T. Roosevelt (1901) to Hoover (1932)	32	1.3	0-7
6	FDR (1934) to Truman (1953)	20	3.4	0-15
7	Eisenhower (1953) to Carter (1981)	30	1.6	0-5
8	Reagan (1982) to Bush43 (2008)	27	6.1	1-13

Both FDR and Truman use religious rhetoric in the State of the Union at an average rate that places them in the top 25% of presidents. Their combined average of 3.4 references in their 20 addresses places this period (1934-1953) second only to the Reagan/Bush era. Following the election of Eisenhower there is another noticeable drop in the average use of religious rhetoric.

The Reagan/Bush era (1982-2008) has the highest average use of religious rhetoric in State of the Union messages. We will examine this period in some detail later

and will see that their usage not only increased but the language became increasingly associated with policy proposals.

[INSERT CHART XII HERE]

The overall use of religious rhetoric delineated by this study as general, policy-related or specific and the total use of religious rhetoric is indicated by Charts XIII, XIV, XV and XVI below.

[INSERT CHARTS XIII, XIV, XV and XVI HERE]

Republican presidents use religious rhetoric more than Democrats

As noted in an earlier discussion, the popular perception is that Republican presidents are more likely to use religious rhetoric in an effort to appeal to religious conservatives for electoral and policy advantages (see discussion in chapter II).

Since Teddy Roosevelt's first State of the Union message in 1901 through George W. Bush's address in 2008 there have been a total of 109 State of the Union addresses—60 delivered by Republicans and 49 by Democrats. During this period Republican presidents have used slightly more religious rhetoric than their Democratic counterparts in these messages. Overall Republicans average 3.2 examples of religious rhetoric while Democrats average 2.7.

[INSERT CHART XVII HERE]

In addition to the overall use of religious rhetoric the content and nature of the rhetoric also varies. Religious rhetoric in Republican State of the Union addresses range from no references on 14 occasions or in 23% of their messages (T. Roosevelt 1902, 1903, 1908; Taft 1909-1912; Harding 1922; Coolidge 1927; Eisenhower 1953, 1961; Nixon 1972, 1973; Ford 1975) to George W. Bush twice using such rhetoric thirteen

times in a single address 2004, 2007). Democrats did not reference religious rhetoric a total of ten times or 20% of the time (Wilson 1915, 1916, 1919 and 1920; FDR 1937 and 1938; Truman 1953; LBJ 1964 and 1969, Carter 1979). FDR used the most religious rhetoric during this period (15 references in 1939) with Bill Clinton using 13 in 1995.

Republican presidents used policy-related religious rhetoric a total of thirty-nine times (or an average of .65 times per address) while Democrats use religious rhetoric related to a policy proposal a total of 19 times or an average of .39 times per address. For example, Teddy Roosevelt would urge regulation of child-labor and slum housing because no “Christian” community could ignore the “youth of today” without paying a “terrible penalty of financial burden and social degradation in the tomorrow” (1904). He would assert that religious affiliation should have no bearing on an immigrant’s status (“whether he is Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile”) in both 1905 and 1906 and state that every “Christian patriot in America” should protest against the “mob spirit that is threatening the integrity of this Republic” related to lynchings and racial violence (1906). The most dramatic and frequent use of religious rhetoric would come in the post-1973 era examined below.

The overall usage of religious rhetoric by Democratic and Republican presidents in the State of the Union is displayed in Chart XVIII below.

[INSERT CHART XVIII HERE]

The second part of the analysis of this question will focus more on contemporary State of the Union messages. As noted in Chapter II, some scholars believe the Supreme

Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) was the catalyst that brought many fundamentalist and evangelical Christians into the political arena and activated Catholic traditionalists. There were certainly other events that led to the formation of the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition and other groups. As the Supreme Court examined establishment and free exercise cases that involved issues from school prayer (*Engel v. Vitale*, 1962; *Abington School District v. Schempp*, 1963) and school attendance (*Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 1972) to privacy, i.e. contraception (*Griswold v. Connecticut*, 1965, and *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, 1972), religious conservatives were motivated to action. But I believe it is the ongoing debate on abortion and related issues that has played a significant role in American politics including presidential politics, state legislative proposals and nominations to the Supreme Court. For this reason, I will examine separately those inaugural addresses before and after the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973.

Pre-1973

The Supreme Court's decision in the case of *Roe v. Wade* was announced on January 22, 1973, two days after Richard Nixon's second inauguration and one month before his fourth State of the Union address. Beginning with Teddy Roosevelt's State of the Union address in 1901 through Nixon's fourth in 1973 there were a total of 37 State of the Union addresses delivered by Republican presidents. I have included Nixon's 1973 address in the "pre-*Roe*" analysis due to the proximity to the decision when the address was delivered and the fact that it was a written message. While Nixon could have inserted language in the message relative to the Court's decision the address was probably prepared prior to the decision being made public.

In terms of the total references of religious rhetoric during the pre-1973 era two addresses stand out: Teddy Roosevelt's in 1901 (7 references) and Franklin Roosevelt's sixth in 1939 (15 references). Teddy Roosevelt's address was his first since the assassination of William McKinley the previous September. Roosevelt spent the first portion of his address extolling the virtues of McKinley, "the most widely loved man in all the United States," and the evils of anarchy. He referred to the assassination as having "Judas-like infamy" and stated that the "wind is sowed by the men who preach such doctrines [anarchy], and they cannot escape their share of responsibility for the whirlwind that is reaped." Roosevelt was referring without attribution Hosea 8:7 which says: "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk; the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up" [KJV]. Roosevelt stated that as he lay dying "in mortal agony," McKinley "uttered no words save of forgiveness to his murderer, of love for his friends, and of faltering trust in the will of the Most High."

Roosevelt would later note the economic prosperity being enjoyed by Americans but noted that "such prosperity can never be created by law alone, although it is easy enough to destroy it by mischievous laws." The source of this prosperity was clearly not man alone, he said, because "If the hand of the Lord is heavy upon any country, if flood or drought comes, human wisdom is powerless to avert the calamity." It was "the rule of brotherhood" that was the indispensable prerequisite to success in the kind of national life for which we strive," Roosevelt said. While each" man must work for himself...each man must remember also that he is indeed his brother's keeper," and we all stumble and need "to have the helping hand outstretched" to us.

Roosevelt also called for reform of our immigration laws stating that we “need every honest and efficient immigrant fitted to become an American citizen, every immigrant who comes here to stay, who brings here a strong body, a stout heart, a good head, and a resolute purpose to do his duty well in every way and to bring up his children as law-abiding and God-fearing members of the community.”

Roosevelt would conclude with an acknowledgement that even in “the midst of our affliction we reverently thank the Almighty that we are at peace with the nations of mankind” and announced that he would continue “unbroken these international relations of mutual respect and good will.”

Franklin Roosevelt would deliver his sixth State of the Union address in 1939 against a backdrop of war. Germany, Italy and Japan had each initiated a series of aggressive moves against other nations. In September of 1939 Hitler would invade Poland in violation of an agreement Hitler had made after taking over part of Czechoslovakia. Britain and France declared war on Germany soon thereafter. Many Americans were opposed to entering the war and a series of neutrality acts had been passed by Congress beginning in 1935. Even though it took the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, for America to enter the war, Roosevelt in this address appeared to be laying the groundwork for American involvement at least in supplying the Allies if not in actual combat troops.

As previously noted, Roosevelt’s 1939 address would include the single highest number of references of religious rhetoric with fifteen. His message was steeped in language that highlighted what was at stake for Americans. The “storms from abroad” directly challenged “three institutions indispensable to Americans.” The first of these

institutions was “religion.” Religion, he said, was the “source of the other two—democracy and international good faith.” All three of these institutions complemented and supported each other.

It was religion, Roosevelt said, that taught “man his relationship to God, gives the individual a sense of his own dignity and teaches him to respect himself by respecting his neighbors.”

Roosevelt would tell his countrymen what was at stake. It wasn’t only our homes but our very civilization that was at risk:

“Where freedom of religion has been attacked, the attack has come from sources opposed to democracy. Where democracy has been overthrown, the spirit of free worship has disappeared. And where religion and democracy have vanished, good faith and reason in international affairs have given way to strident ambition and brute force.

An ordering of society which relegates religion, democracy and good faith among nations to the background can find no place within it for the ideals of the Prince of Peace. The United States rejects such an ordering, and retains its ancient faith.

There comes a time in the affairs of men when they must prepare to defend, not their homes alone, but the tenets of faith and humanity on which their churches, their governments and their very civilization are founded. The defense of religion, of democracy and of good faith among nations is all the same fight. To save one we must now make up our minds to save all.”

We have learned, Roosevelt said, “that God-fearing democracies... observe the sanctity of treaties...” On the other hand, “Dictatorship...involves costs which the American people will never pay: The cost of our spiritual values...The cost of freedom of religion.” Roosevelt would conclude with a quote from Lincoln’s 1862 State of the Union message: “The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which if followed the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless.”

Beginning with Teddy Roosevelt through Nixon's 1973 address transmitted shortly after the announcement of the Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, there were a total of seventy-four State of the Union addresses—37 were delivered by Republicans and 37 by Democrats. Republicans averaged 1.59 references of religious rhetoric while Democrats averaged 2.27.

[INSERT CHART XIX HERE]

Post-1973

Since the decision in *Roe v. Wade* there have been a total of thirty-five State of the Union messages—23 by Republicans and 12 by Democrats.

As indicated by the following chart, since 1974 Republican presidents have used religious rhetoric an average of 5.74 times per address while Democrats have used such rhetoric only 3.91 times. It would appear that contemporary Republican presidents do use religious rhetoric more than Democrats.

The analysis of State of the Union addresses shows the following. Since Teddy Roosevelt's State of the Union address in 1901 Republicans have used religious rhetoric more frequently than Democrats. When broken down to examine those State of the Union messages delivered before and after *Roe v. Wade*, the analysis shows that the use of religious rhetoric has increased significantly for Republicans after *Roe* (average of 1.59 per address before 1974 to 5.74 per address after 1974) while for Democrats there has been only a slight increase (2.27 to 3.91). Since 1973 Republicans have used religious rhetoric an average of over twice the average rate for Democrats on policy-related matters and nearly twice as much in specific religious references. The two parties

are nearly identical in their average use of general religious rhetoric (1.35 references to 1.67).

[INSERT CHART XX HERE]

Most of the increase related to policy issues was due to the religious rhetoric of Reagan and Bush⁴³ supporting a school prayer amendment, restrictions on abortion and eligibility for faith-based organizations to have access to federal grant funding. This is significant because it marks a move from using religious rhetoric to acknowledge a providential blessing or seeking future divine guidance in a general sense to rhetoric that seeks to motivate support for a particular policy proposal.

Religious rhetoric will decrease during a president's second term

If presidents use religious rhetoric for an electoral advantage one could assume that this incentive would be reduced during their second term. Since all president's followed Washington's precedent and did not seek re-election after their second term (with the obvious exception of FDR) there would be no electoral incentive to use religious rhetoric. There have been 17 presidents who have delivered State of the Union messages both before and after their final election/re-election as president. Included in this number are vice-presidents who finished out the term of a deceased or assassinated president and then were elected for their own term (these include: Teddy Roosevelt's messages in 1901, 1902, 1903 and 1904 following the assassination of William McKinley; Calvin Coolidge's addresses in 1923 and 1924 following Harding's death; Truman 1946, 1947 and 1948 after the death of FDR; and LBJ's 1964 message after the assassination of Kennedy). FDR, of course, was elected a total of four times to the

presidency. For purposes of this analysis I omit an analysis of his addresses. It would be difficult to assume that FDR's intent was to seek or not seek re-election each term and if religious rhetoric was to be used for an electoral purpose it would apply to all his addresses with the possible exception of his last in 1945. It should be noted, however, that there was a noticeable increase in the religious rhetoric FDR used in his second and third terms (1937-1944) compared to his first three messages (1934-1936). In his first term he used an average of 1.67 references of religious rhetoric while in the next eight he would average 4.1 references.

I have also included in this analysis the messages of Grover Cleveland. Cleveland, of course, was defeated for re-election in 1888 but recaptured the White House in 1892. Unpopular within the Democratic Party by 1896, Cleveland was denied the nomination. Democrats instead chose William Jennings Bryan who had enthralled the Chicago convention with his "Cross of Gold" speech (Kazin 2006). This leaves us with a total of sixteen presidents to examine.

Of the sixteen presidents who delivered one or more State of the Union messages in two different terms, nine reduced their use of religious rhetoric during their second term.

For presidents who use more religious rhetoric in their second term, the average increase from the first term to the second was .83. For those that use fewer references of religious rhetoric, the average decrease was 1.49. It would appear that there is a tendency for presidents to use fewer references of religious rhetoric in their second term as opposed to their first term or during an initial partial term. If religious rhetoric is a way for candidates and presidents to connect with the electorate and motivate them to support

an their election or reelection, then this reduction in religious rhetoric may reflect the reality that there will be no future personal campaigns for these lame-duck presidents. What we may see, however, is continued use of religious rhetoric in support of policy initiatives as opposed to personal elections.

[INSERT CHART XXI HERE]

A more comprehensive examination of each president is demonstrated in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Use of Religious Rhetoric in State of the Union: First term vs. Second term

President	Average use of religious rhetoric: First Term (number of messages)	Average use of religious rhetoric: Second Term (number of messages)
Washington	1.0 (4)	1.75 (4)
Jefferson	1.25 (4)	.5 (4)
Madison	1.25 (4)	2.0 (4)
Monroe	1.25 (4)	.75 (4)
Jackson	5.5 (4)	1.75 (4)
Grant	3.25 (4)	2.25 (4)
Cleveland	3.0 (4)	1.5 (4)
T. Roosevelt	3.25 (4)	1.75 (4)
Wilson	.25 (4)	1.25 (4)
Coolidge	1.5 (2)	1.75 (4)
Truman	3.3 (3)	3.6 (5)
LBJ	0 (1)	1.4 (5)
Nixon	.67(3)	.5 (2)
Reagan	6.67 (3)	8.0 (4)
Clinton	6.5 (4)	4.0 (4)
Bush 43	7.75 (4)	6.5 (4)

Religious rhetoric will increase during a time of war

Periods of war can be very traumatic for a country. Various segments of the population may oppose military involvement while others may favor such action. The president, as Commander in Chief, must make decisions on whether or not to order military action and direct the manner in which the action is conducted. Some wars may be more popular with the citizenry than others. This is especially true during an extended military deployment.¹⁰⁶ A president may find it necessary to convince the Congress and/or the American people that military action is needed. He may also find it advantageous to bolster public morale or support for the war during the hostilities. The use of religious rhetoric might be one way for the president to address concerns and necessity in a way that resonates with the American people.

As noted in Chapter II, periods of “war” are difficult to define. For purposes of this analysis, war is defined as periods of both declared wars and undeclared wars. These include the War of 1812 (1812-14), the Mexican War (1846-47), the Civil War (1861-1865), the Spanish American War (1898), World War I (1917-18), World War II (1941-45), the Korean War (1951-53), Vietnam (1964-72), Operation Desert Storm (1991) and the war in Afghanistan and Iraq (2002-08). It does not include addresses that occurred

¹⁰⁶ Vietnam and Iraq are two examples of military action where public opinion turned against continued involvement. When the war in Iraq started in March 2003, only 23% of adults nationwide said it was a mistake to send troops to Iraq, while three-quarters said it was not a mistake. The percentage of Americans saying it was a mistake gradually increased, and by the end of 2003, it reached the 40% range. By June 2004, just one year and three months after the war began, a majority of Americans reached the conclusion that the war was a mistake.
[http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/archives/2005/08/iraq_versus_vietnam_a_comparison_of_public_opini
on/](http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/archives/2005/08/iraq_versus_vietnam_a_comparison_of_public_opinion/), accessed May 30, 2008.

during what has been described as the Cold War. It does not include military actions such as Grenada, Panama, Kosovo, Bosnia or Somalia.

For purposes of this study, the following State of the Union messages were included in the “war” classification:

- Madison 1812, 1813 and 1814
- Polk 1846 and 1847
- Lincoln 1861, 1862, 1863 and 1864
- McKinley 1898
- Wilson 1917 and 1918
- FDR 1941¹⁰⁷, 1942, 1943, 1944 and 1945
- Truman 1951, 1952 and 1953
- LBJ 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1969
- Nixon 1970, 1971 and 1972
- Bush (41) 1991
- Bush (43) 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

These messages will be analyzed and compared to “non-war” periods. They will be compared to messages delivered by other presidents as well as those delivered by these presidents times during their presidency coded as “non-war.”

Examining these thirty-seven State of the Union messages indicates the total increase in religious rhetoric during periods of war averaged .55 references per address. As shown by Chart XXII below, the referenced war time addresses contained an average

¹⁰⁷ I have included FDR’s 1941 address even though America had not entered the war at that time. It would take the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December following his address to finally thrust America into the conflict. In his 1941 address, however, FDR discusses the struggle in some detail and prepare the American people for involvement. This address is often referred to as the “Four Freedoms” speech as FDR details what he described as “four essential human freedoms.” These include: freedom of speech and expression; freedom of every person to worship God in his own way; freedom from want; and freedom from fear.

of 1.54 specific references, .59 policy-related references and .92 general references for a total average of 3.11 references of religious rhetoric. This compares to the average usage in periods of non-war of .76 specific, .55 policy-related, 1.26 general and 2.57 total references. However this increase needs to be carefully examined for two basic reasons. First, due to the number of messages delivered by George W. Bush (7) and his propensity to utilize religious rhetoric the overall usage during times of war may be skewed. Secondly, some of the rhetoric used in war time messages appear unrelated to the war or the war effort.

[INSERT CHART XXII HERE]

The religious rhetoric shown in Chart XXII includes all references of religious rhetoric. Some messages use religious rhetoric specifically to reference the war. For example, Madison in his fourth message (1812) discusses at great length the preparations for war including the stationing of a large contingent of troops in Michigan “in the event of war.” He recounted the retreat to and subsequent fall of Detroit, “the refusal of the governors of Maine and Connecticut to furnish the required detachments of militia” and other early losses and victories. He concludes his message with the statement that Americans had the “consolation of knowing that the war in which we are actually engaged is a war neither of ambition nor of vain glory; that it is waged not in violation of the rights of others, but in the maintenance of our own; that it was preceded by a patience without example under wrongs accumulating without end, and that it was finally not declared until every hope of averting it was extinguished ...” To have not taken the

action “under such circumstances... would have been a degradation blasting our best and proudest hopes...” It was only “at this moment ... that war was chosen. The nation felt the necessity of it, and called for it.” He uses religious rhetoric (the only references of religious rhetoric in the message) to state that: “The appeal was accordingly made, in a just cause, to the Just and All-powerful Being who holds in His hand the chain of events and the destiny of nations. It remains only that, faithful to ourselves, entangled in no connections with the views of other powers, and ever ready to accept peace from the hand of justice, we prosecute the war with united counsels and with the ample faculties of the nation until peace be so obtained and as the only means under the Divine blessing of speedily obtaining it.”

Madison’s fifth message (1813) would conclude that American success was due to the fact that it “pleased the Almighty to bless our arms both on the land and on the water.” He concluded with the statement that “the war, with all its vicissitudes,” demonstrated the “capacity and the destiny of the United States to be a great, a flourishing, and a powerful nation...” All America sought was “to require from all an observance of the laws of justice and reciprocity.” In seeking that goal the nation could “humbly repose our trust in the smiles of Heaven on so righteous a cause.”

McKinley in his 1898 message would recount the events that had transpired in Cuba and state that: “In tracing these events we are constantly reminded of our obligations to the Divine Master for His watchful care over us and His safe guidance, for which the nation makes reverent acknowledgment and offers humble prayer for the continuance of His favor.”

Wilson took the opportunity in his 1917 address to discuss both the war and the plans for a peace after the war was concluded that would be based “on generosity and justice, to the exclusions of all selfish claims to advantage even on the part of the victors.” He concluded by noting that “even in the heat and ardor of the struggle and when our whole thought is of carrying the war through to its end, we have not forgotten any ideal or principle for which the name of America has been held in honor among the nations...” He ended by stating: “The eyes of the people have been opened and they see. The hand of God is laid upon the nations. He will show them favor, I devoutly believe, only if they rise to the clear heights of His own justice and mercy.”

Franklin Roosevelt’s ninth address was given less than one month after the attack on Pear Harbor and the declaration of war against Germany and Japan. Roosevelt would place American involvement in stark terms with a religious basis. He said that our enemies “know that victory for us means victory for religion. And they could not tolerate that. The world is too small to provide adequate ‘living room’ for both Hitler and God. In proof of that, the Nazis have now announced their plan for enforcing their new German, pagan religion all over the world—a plan by which the Holy Bible and the Cross of Mercy would be displaced by Mein Kampf and the swastika and the naked sword.” Our objectives were clear, Roosevelt said. These objectives included “smashing the militarism imposed by war lords upon their enslaved peoples...liberating the subjugated Nations;” and “establishing and securing freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear everywhere in the world.”

While “Our enemies are guided by brutal cynicism” and an “unholy contempt for the human race,” Americans were “inspired by a faith that goes back through all the years

to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis: God created man in His own image. We on our side are striving to be true to that divine heritage. We are fighting, as our fathers have fought, to uphold the doctrine that all men are equal in the sight of God.”

His 1944 address would include only a single reference of religious rhetoric but it would be powerful as he reminded Americans that “Each and every one of us has a solemn obligation under God to serve this Nation in its most critical hour—to keep this Nation great—to make this Nation greater in a better world.”

As noted previously, George W. Bush ranks second, overall, in his use of religious rhetoric. Seven of his State of the Union addresses were delivered since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Those seven addresses contain an average of 7.7 references of religious rhetoric. Despite the fact that his presidency will probably be defined in many respects by the subsequent military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, Bush seldom used religious rhetoric regarding those events. Only 18, or 1/3 of the references, were connected to the war effort. Most of his religious references were general examples (i.e. variations of the now common ending “God Bless America”) or related to a domestic policy proposal.

Interestingly, most of the religious references related to the war were not similar to some historical examples such as justifying the action to preserve our religion or that we were engaged in a “righteous cause” or seeking “Divine blessing” in winning the war. Most of the religious references used by Bush were tied to Islam. While they certainly were intended to explain or justify his actions they were less overtly motivational or inspirational than other language used by previous presidents.

In his 2002 address he would propose that America double the number of Peace Corps volunteers “to encourage development and education and opportunity in the Islamic world.” Defending liberty and justice was the right thing for America. No people, Bush said, sought oppression or servitude and if “anyone doubts this, let them look to Afghanistan, where the Islamic ‘street’ greeted the fall of tyranny with song and celebration” or “look to Islam's own rich history, with its centuries of learning and tolerance and progress.” And while we did not seek to impose “our culture,” America would always take the side of “brave men and women who advocate these values [human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance] around the world, including the Islamic world, because we have a greater objective than eliminating threats and containing resentment. We seek a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror.”

By 2006 Bush’s tone would change and he would refer to “radical Islam—the perversion by a few of a noble faith into an ideology of terror and death.” We had to confront “radical Islam” because if we allowed it “to work its will...we would signal to all that we no longer believe in our own ideals or even in our own courage.”

Bush increasingly couches his justification for the war in religious terms as he refers to Iran as “a nation now held hostage by a small clerical elite that is isolating and repressing its people” (2006). “Al Qaida and its followers are Sunni extremists” and they comprise “just one camp in the Islamist radical movement,” Bush said. But it was not just Sunni “extremists” that we confronted but Bush said it had also become clear “that we face an escalating danger from Shi’a extremists...who are different faces of the same totalitarian threat.” These religious sects were our enemy and the enemy of each other,

Bush noted, and referred to “Sunni extremists” blowing up of “one of the most sacred places in Shi’a Islam, the Golden Mosque of Samarra...a Muslim house of prayer.”

Similar events would occur, Bush asserted and we “could expect an epic battle between Shi’a extremists backed by Iran and Sunni extremists aided by Al Qaida and supporters of the old regime” (2007).

Other presidents would use little religious rhetoric in their State of the Union addresses given during these periods of war. It even varied by each individual president. George W. Bush, for example, in 2005 would use only two references: one where he stated that the “road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable—yet we know where it leads: It leads to freedom.” The other where he closed with: “Thank you, and may God bless America.”

His father, George H. W. Bush, would use no religious rhetoric in his 1991 address given during the brief Gulf War to remove Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Likewise, Lincoln used no religious rhetoric in his 1863 message. LBJ would use no religious rhetoric related to the Vietnam War in 1964, 1966, 1967 and 1969. Nixon would use no such rhetoric in 1971 or 1972.

Overall, of the 117 references of religious rhetoric contained in the thirty-seven war time messages analyzed, only 64 (55%) were related to the war or war effort.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

*Revive us again; fill each heart with thy love,
May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.*¹⁰⁸

The data derived from this analysis strongly support the conclusion that the use of religious rhetoric by presidents in their Inaugural addresses and State of the Union messages has increased over time. As shown by the analysis and accompanying charts, the total use of religious rhetoric and specific religious rhetoric has increased in both the Inaugural Address and State of the Union. The more difficult question is why this increase has taken place.

Does religious rhetoric merely reflect the religious culture of the moment or is it a device that helps shape the religious culture? There have been numerous studies that suggest religious traditions are “socially learned and socially produced, particularly through language” (Coe and Domke 2006, 311; Sherkat, 2003; Wald, 1997; Wuthnow, 1994; Zuckerman, 2003). People tend to prefer the familiar, and religious preferences are generally reinforced through routine religious experiences (Skerkat 2003, 152). Advances in communication technology permits presidential rhetoric to be widely disseminated to the American people. Their use of religious themes and specific religious rhetoric can be an important factor in the ongoing process of religious socialization. It can also provide presidents a greater opportunity to use rhetoric that resonates with people of faith. It is beyond the scope of this project to assess the

¹⁰⁸ *Revive Us Again*, Words by William P. MacKay, music by John J. Husband.

potential impact of religious rhetoric on political socialization but it raises an interesting question that future research might illuminate.

Historically there have been notable increases in the use of religious rhetoric by individual presidents overall or particular addresses by presidents. Many of these ‘peaks’ have been discussed in detail in the previous chapters. The data point to examples by William Henry Harrison, Lincoln, Garfield, Harding, FDR and Eisenhower that are significantly higher in the use of religious rhetoric. But the increase that has been most notable and the period during which the most sustained use of religious rhetoric has occurred can be traced to the era beginning with Reagan.

By the late 1970s the Christian Right movement was clearly identifiable in American politics. Jimmy Carter, a devout Southern Baptist who spoke openly of his faith and his ‘born again’ experience, was elected in 1976 but failed to fulfill the expectations of many Christian conservatives. Jerry Falwell, Robert Grant, James Dodson and Pat Robertson were leaders in an effort to use the political process to bring Christian conservatives into the political process and address what they saw as a decline in moral values. Ronald Reagan provided the ideal message that appealed to religious conservatives. Reagan’s opposition to abortion, support for school prayer and his characterization of the Soviet Union as an ‘evil empire’ were attractive to this segment of the electorate. Additionally, Reagan was adept at using a communication strategy that appealed to both religious conservatives and the general public (Coe and Domke 2006).

Reagan’s successor, George H. W. Bush, was viewed as being weaker in his support for the core issues of the Christian Right. This lack of enthusiasm from the

Christian Right led Pat Robertson to challenge Bush in the 1988 Republican Party primaries. Bush's use of religious rhetoric was also more limited than that of Reagan.

Bill Clinton, another Southern Baptist, was very comfortable in the language of religion and reverted to the trend for more religious rhetoric similar to the Reagan era. But while he often used religious rhetoric, Clinton's policies found stiff opposition in the Christian Right. His decision to repeal the ban on gays serving in the military as well as his positions on abortion and other social issues were used to mobilize Christian conservatives in the political process. When Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives in the 1994 midterm elections it is estimated that close to 60% of winning candidates received support from the Christian Coalition (Edwards 1999). Many of these same religious conservatives were instrumental in pressing for the impeachment of Clinton (Easton 2002). By the 2000 elections Conger and Green concluded that "Christian conservatives ha[d] become a staple of politics nearly everywhere" (2002, 65).

It was in the midst of this environment that George W. Bush sought the presidency in 2000. As noted, Bush adopted the strategy advocated by Doug Wead who suggested that political leaders should "signal early, signal often" their religious views. The rhetoric employed by Bush certainly resonated with the Christian Right throughout the election and his first term. The connection between Bush and religious conservatives was so prevalent that Dana Milbank opined that "For the first time since religious conservatives became a modern political movement, the president of the United States has become the movement's de facto leader—a status even Ronald Reagan, though admired by religious conservatives, never earned" (Milbank 2001).

The data support the conclusion that Ronald Reagan was a turning point in use of religious rhetoric by presidents. Further that the rhetoric used by Reagan and Bush43 have differed in important ways from that of other modern presidents. First, the findings indicate that Reagan and Bush have employed more religious rhetoric and more specific religious rhetoric than their predecessors. It would appear that this increase is due to the increasing dominance of religious conservatives in electoral politics and the desire of candidates and presidents to connect with the voting block. This appears especially true for Republicans. Even Bush41, who lacked the support from these groups enjoyed by Reagan and his son, would attempt to use religious rhetoric to connect with them. He began his inaugural Address with a prayer but used very little religious rhetoric in his State of the Union messages. The use of religious rhetoric by Bush41 was less consistent than his predecessor or subsequent presidents.

This greater use of religious rhetoric since Reagan may simply be a presidential articulation of their personal religious beliefs and their desire to state these beliefs publicly. It may also be an attempt to motivate voters within the electorate that share positions on policy issues that were grounded in a conservative Christian belief. Or it may be that in an American society that appears to becoming more secular and materialistic that the rhetoric of religion is reassuring to many Americans who long for a perceived nostalgic view of previous society.

In terms of electoral motivation, Karl Rove certainly expressed the need to energize Christian conservatives for Bush's 2004 re-election. Reliance on strong policy positions that appealed to that segment of the electorate and reinforcing those positions with religious rhetoric would have served that purpose. An overall perception of Bush

that proved attractive to other people of faith could be bolstered not only by policy but by rhetoric.

What is certain is that the use of such language in the ‘public sphere’ has increased to unprecedented levels. This includes the use of religious rhetoric in the Inaugural Address and State of the Union address. The implications are significant. While the data show that much of the religious rhetoric utilized by early presidents was ceremonial in nature and often not specific to a particular religious tradition, such rhetoric has changed. Should we be concerned about this increased use of religious rhetoric? Some might be concerned that this change in rhetoric also exhibits a change in the approach presidents utilized in their decision-making process and ultimate policy judgment. This interaction of faith and policy seems to be paramount in the public discourse related to abortion, school prayer and same sex marriage but can also be seen in Bush’s efforts to create faith-based programs and to limit funding for embryonic stem-cell research.

Foreign policy can also be impacted by this blending of religion and policy. While the noted examples of Reagan and Bush⁴³ are not the first time a president has used the rhetoric of religion to justify or support a foreign policy action (i.e. McKinley’s actions related to the Philippines), it should be a factor to consider when assessing those decisions. When Bush stated that the “liberty” we are seeking to install in the Middle East and elsewhere is “God’s gift to humanity” in his 2003 State of the Union address it sounds perilously close to describing a sort of Manifest Destiny or American exceptionalism for the United States in foreign affairs. Bush reaffirmed this theme in his second inaugural address calling God the “Author of Liberty.” He concluded his 2005

State of the Union address by stating that “The road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable—yet we know where it leads: it leads to freedom” (Bush 2005).

While scholars cannot “look into the soul” of a president or a presidential candidate to determine the sincerity of their words, we can analyze their rhetoric to explore the potential policy initiatives we can expect and the basis for those initiatives. With Reagan and Bush43, their personal faith story (as mentioned earlier) combined with the substantial influence of the evangelical segment of the electorate have created a political environment that has allowed and encouraged the use of religious rhetoric more frequently and more specifically Christian than previous presidents.

Both sides were pursuing a strategy to further their own interests. The Christian Right was searching for a candidate to further their social agenda and the candidates were looking for electoral support. The fact that Reagan was successful in defeating an incumbent president and securing re-election may have motivated subsequent candidates to adopt a rhetorical strategy to appeal to those voters. Success in politics certainly leads to imitation. We often hear that candidates criticize negative political advertisements but continue to use them because they work. The same might be true of religious rhetoric. As long as the voting public responds favorably to the rhetoric and the image it creates we can expect it to be emulated by future candidates and presidents.

Findings

Regarding the focus of this research and the five stated hypotheses, the data support the following findings as applied to Inaugural Addresses and State of the Union messages:

- 1. Use of religious rhetoric in Inaugural Addresses and State of the Union messages has increased.**

2. **Presidents employ religious rhetoric that is increasingly more specific and more Christian in content.**
3. **Republican presidents use religious rhetoric more than Democrats.**
4. **Religious rhetoric will decrease during a president's second term.**
5. **Religious rhetoric will not significantly increase during a time of war.**

Use of religious rhetoric in Inaugural Addresses and State of the Union messages has increased.

As demonstrated by Chart XXIII religious rhetoric has increased in both Inaugural Addresses and State of the Union messages. Two presidents gave an inaugural address but died before giving even a single State of the Union message (William Henry Harrison and James Garfield). Five presidents delivered one or more State of the Union messages but did not deliver a formal inaugural address. These include John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, Chester A. Arthur and Gerald Ford. Several of these presidents did deliver remarks after being sworn in but, as noted in Chapter II, these were not considered Inaugural Addresses for purposes of this study.

[INSERT CHART XXIII HERE]

The remaining thirty-five individual presidents delivered at least one inaugural address and one State of the Union message. As shown in Chart XXIII the overall trend line for both inaugural addresses and State of the Union message shows an increase. Two other observations are also demonstrated by this data. First, religious rhetoric in inaugural address is generally higher than that utilized in the State of the Union. Most presidents used more religious rhetoric in their inaugural addresses than the average they would subsequently use in their State of the Union messages. When exceptions to this propensity occurred the difference was relatively slight. For example, Madison used an

average of 1.5 religious references in his two inaugural addresses and 1.625 references in his eight State of the Union messages. Other presidents who used slightly more religious rhetoric are demonstrated in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Presidents showing an increase in religious rhetoric in State of the Union messages compared to their Inaugural Addresses

President	(Average) use of religious rhetoric in Inaugural Address(es)	Average use of religious rhetoric in State of the Union messages
Madison	1.5	1.625
John Quincy Adams	4	4.5
Jackson	1	3.625
Hayes	2	2.25
Cleveland (first term)	2	3
Teddy Roosevelt	1	2.5
FDR	3.25	3.33
Clinton	4	5.25

Second, the data also indicate that use of religious rhetoric is fairly consistent for individual presidents. In other words, presidents who use religious rhetoric in their inaugural addresses also tend to use similar content in their State of the Union messages. Overall twelve presidents used an average number of religious references in their inaugural addresses or State of the Union messages that were within one reference from the other. The use by presidents tended to reflect a pattern consistent with the use in both types of addresses. As the data show an increase, for example, in the inaugural address it also shows a fairly consistent increase in that president’s State of the Union message. There were some notable exceptions. Thomas Jefferson used an average of 5.5 references in his two inaugural addresses which were more than either Washington or

Adams. But his eight State of the Union messages averaged only .875 references—less than either Washington or Adams.

But the president who exhibited the greatest disparity was Warren Harding. Harding used twelve examples of religious rhetoric in his inaugural address but only averaged .5 references in his two State of the Union messages. Harding also started a trend as nine of the next thirteen presidents would use significantly less religious rhetoric in their State of the Union messages than their inaugural addresses. These included Coolidge (-5.33), Hoover (-2.75), Truman (-2.5), Eisenhower (-4.67), Kennedy (-4), LBJ (-3.83), Nixon (-5.4), Carter (-1.75) and Bush 41 (-5.75).

The exceptions to that trend were FDR and Clinton. FDR used slightly more in his State of the Union messages than his inaugural addresses (3.25 compared to 3.33). Clinton used 5.25 references in his State of the Union messages compared to the average of four in his two inaugural addresses.

The other exceptions were Reagan and Bush 43. Both Reagan and Bush 43 used high amounts of religious rhetoric in both venues and their use of in their two inaugural addresses averaged only slightly more than their use in the State of the Union. Reagan averaged eight references in his inaugurals and 7.43 in his State of the Union messages. Bush 43 used an average of 7.5 in his inaugurals and 7.125 in his State of the Union messages.

The significance of this data suggests that most presidents have viewed the Inaugural Address as more ceremonial and thanks to a deity for past blessings or imploring future assistance would be appropriate in such a setting. For these presidents

the State of the Union was more of a practical message and, with few exceptions, such language was not required or appropriate.

The recent trend exhibited by Reagan, Clinton and Bush⁴³ would seem to indicate that modern presidents are cognizant of the fact more Americans have access to the addresses through radio, television and (now) the Internet. The language is designed to appeal to a much broader audience than the assembled members of Congress. Speaking in the ‘temple of democracy’ recent presidents have assumed the mantle of a Pastor-in-Chief and have infused their remarks with the language of religion.

Presidents employ religious rhetoric that is increasingly more specific and more Christian in content.

As noted in the earlier chapters, total use of religious rhetoric has increased in both inaugural addresses and State of the Union messages (see Chart II and Chart XI). At the same time the use of what I have defined as General religious rhetoric has declined (Chart III and Chart XIII).

Use of religious rhetoric tied to specific policies or programs have practically disappeared in the inaugural address. Of the first thirty-six inaugural address fourteen contained religious rhetoric that was used related to a policy or program (38.9%). Since FDR’s 1933 inaugural address there have been nineteen inaugurals. Only one (Nixon 1973) contained religious rhetoric in this vein (5.3%).

There has been a slight overall trend that shows an increase of religious rhetoric related to policies or programs in the State of the Union. This is due to the significant increase in such rhetoric contained in the in State of the Union messages of Buchanan (1857-1860), Grant (1870-1871, 1875), Cleveland (1885) and McKinley (1899-1900).

This increase in rhetoric used for this purpose is similar to that in the State of the Union messages of Reagan, Clinton and Bush 43.

From Eisenhower's fourth State of the Union message (1957) until Carter's third (1980) there was not a single example of religious rhetoric tied to a policy or program—a total of twenty-four messages. The twenty-seven messages delivered beginning with Reagan's first (1982) have contained a total of forty references. Most of those have been contained in Reagan's seven messages (16) and those of Bush 43 (eight messages containing 14 references).

But the most significant overall increase has been in specific religious rhetoric. Rhetoric that contains: "references to the Bible, a Bible verse or chapter; or a quote from the Bible (whether specifically identified or not); referencing or quoting a religious hymn; references to 'God,' 'Christ' or 'Christianity.' Also references to other specific religious faiths, i.e. 'Islam' or 'Muslim.'"

As shown in Chart V and Chart XV this trend has accelerated under recent presidents. As indicated in earlier discussions there have been notable increases in individual addresses (Lincoln's second inaugural and Harding's inaugural. Pierce's 1854 State of the Union and Buchanan's 1860 State of the Union message). Since FDR's 1933 inaugural presidents have used an average of 3.47 specific religious references in inaugural addresses (19 total messages) and an average of 1.74 in State of the Union messages (77 total messages). Included in these messages are those that show examples of the highest use of specific religious rhetoric. For inaugural addresses these include FDR (1933) 6, FDR (1945) 5, Kennedy (1961) 5, LBJ (1965) 5, Nixon (1969) 7 and Reagan (1985) 8. Six of the eight inaugural addresses containing at least five references

of a specific nature have occurred since FDR. The two exceptions are Lincoln's 2nd (6) and Harding's (7).

Regarding State of the Union messages, every message since Carter's third (1980) have included at least one example of specific religious rhetoric. Those 29 messages averaged 2.86 references of a specific nature. This group of messages also includes the three State of the Union messages with the highest number of references of specific religious rhetoric. Those include Reagan's third (9), Bush 43's second (6) and seventh (10). This use of what I have defined as specific religious rhetoric would appear to reflect recognition that the majority of Americans are Christian and the language is used to resonate with them.

As noted earlier, there is little dispute that the overwhelming majority of colonists were Protestants during the colonial and revolutionary periods. Much of the rhetoric examined in this study by early presidents was very general and often referred to Providence, the Supreme Architect, etc. when mentioning a deity. Over time the use of the word God become more prevalent. There were more references to the Bible often with citations of a particular chapter or verse. This might suggest early presidents sought to appear neutral in their religious rhetoric as a symbol of their commitment to religious freedom or toleration.

As America grew and our religious communities became much more diverse, presidential rhetoric, instead of noting or celebrating this diversity, has become more specific or narrow in content. Perhaps this is an attempt to reassure the declining majority of Christians and provide a sense of unity.

Republican presidents use religious rhetoric more than Democrats.

Contemporary perceptions would indicate that we can expect Republican presidents to use more religious rhetoric than Democrats. This is due to the involvement of the Christian Right in Republican presidential politics and the policy positions taken by recent Republican presidents on issues important to that group including school prayer, abortion, stem cell research and same sex marriage. The data support the conclusion that recent Republican presidents have used religious rhetoric more often than their Democratic counterparts but this is different from earlier presidents' use of such rhetoric.

Republican presidents have always used more religious rhetoric than Democrats in their inaugural addresses. The data indicate that this trend has accelerated since *Roe v. Wade*. Beginning with Teddy Roosevelt (1905) through 1973 Republican presidents used an average of 5.8 examples of religious rhetoric in their inaugural addresses compared to 3.5 references by Democrats. After *Roe* the use of religious rhetoric by Republicans increased dramatically in inaugural addresses from an average of 5.8 references to an average of 8.0. Religious rhetoric by Democrats only increased slightly in this same period (3.5 references to 3.7).

While it is difficult to attribute specific intentions to presidential use of certain rhetoric, it would certainly appear that recent Republican presidents have consistently used more religious rhetoric than earlier presidents from either party. In the eight inaugural addresses delivered since Carter's 1977 address (3 Democrat and 5 Republican), the religious rhetoric used breaks down as follows:

Table 4. Inaugural Addresses since 1977

President	Specific	General	Total
Carter—1977	2	1	3
Reagan—1981	4	2	6
Reagan—1985	8	2	10
Bush41—1989	3	6	9
Clinton—1993	3	1	4
Clinton—1997	1	3	4
Bush 43—2001	2	7	9
Bush 43—2005	4	2	6

There is a similar pattern in the use of religious rhetoric in State of the Union messages.

The exception to this trend is Bush 41. In his four State of the Union messages, Bush used an average of 3.25 references of religious rhetoric. This was more than Carter's average of 1.25 but less than Clinton's average of 4.0. All three of these presidents used religious rhetoric in their State of the Union messages at a much lower average rate than either Reagan or Bush 43. Reagan used religious rhetoric an average of 7.43 times per address and Bush 43 used such rhetoric an average of 7.125 times per message.

Perhaps the reduced use of this rhetoric by Bush 41 can be attributed to reports that he never felt comfortable with the rhetoric. His lukewarm support from the Christian

Right and his defeat for re-election might have also contributed to his son's decision to use religious rhetoric "early and often."

Religious rhetoric will decrease during a president's second term.

As noted in the analysis contained in the previous chapters, the data support the conclusion that religious rhetoric will decrease during a president's second term. Of the sixteen presidents who delivered two inaugural addresses, three used the same amount of religious rhetoric in their second inaugural while ten used less. Of the sixteen presidents who delivered a State of the Union message in more than one term (including vice-presidents who succeeded a deceased president and then were re-elected for their own term), nine used fewer references of religious rhetoric in their second term.¹⁰⁹ As previously shown in Chart XXI, those presidents who used more religious rhetoric in their second term did so minimally while five of the presidents used significantly more religious rhetoric in their first term (Jackson, Grant, Cleveland, Teddy Roosevelt and Clinton).

Future study might reveal circumstances in these terms that could explain the frequency or content of religious rhetoric. Absent a more in-depth examination it would appear that presidents in their second term had no electoral motivation to use rhetoric appealing to a religious segment of Americans. Even before the ratification of the 22nd Amendment all presidents except FDR had followed the precedent established by Washington and did not seek a third term. If presidents believed that religious rhetoric would aid in their campaigns, having already won what would be their last election, it was no longer necessary (at least for the electoral success) to use this rhetoric.

¹⁰⁹ As noted in their previous discussion in Chapters II and III, for purposes of this analysis I used FDR's first and second inaugural addresses. I did not include FDR in the analysis related to the State of the Union.

Religious rhetoric will not significantly increase during a time of war.

The data indicate that the use of religious rhetoric does not increase significantly during a period of war. This is somewhat surprising since it might be anticipated that a president would use religious rhetoric to calm the fears or sooth the anguish of the people during those periods. However, the seven inaugural addresses¹¹⁰ delivered during wartime¹¹¹ do show only an increase from those delivered during periods of ‘non-war.’ The average number of references of religious rhetoric during “non-war” periods was 4.5 while the average use during “war” periods was 6.0.

The increase for State of the Union messages is much smaller. Messages delivered during periods of “non-war” averaged 2.57 religious references while those delivered during periods of “war” averaged 3.11. In terms of content it is interesting to note that the use of specific religious rhetoric more than doubled during periods of “war.” So it might be asserted that presidents used more religious rhetoric only slightly but did use rhetoric tied more specifically to a religious tradition or deity.

It should be noted that there are many examples of presidential rhetoric delivered during periods of war that are not included in this analysis limited to Inaugural Addresses and State of the Union messages. When FDR asked for a declaration of war against Japan he expressed confidence in “the inevitable triumph -- so help us God.” His radio address containing the D-Day prayer sought the blessings of “Almighty God” to assist in

¹¹⁰ Madison 1813, Lincoln 1865, Wilson 1917, FDR 1945, Eisenhower 1953, Bush(43) 2005 and Obama 2009.

¹¹¹ “War” is defined as periods of both declared wars and undeclared wars. These include the War of 1812 (1812-14), the Mexican War (1846-47), the Civil War (1861-1865), the Spanish American War (1898), World War I (1917-18), World War II (1941-45), the Korean War (1951-53), Vietnam (1964-75), Operation Desert Storm (1991) and the war in Afghanistan and Iraq (2002-08). It does not include addresses that occurred during what has been described as the Cold War. It does not include military actions such as Grenada, Panama, Kosovo, Bosnia or Somalia.

the struggle “to preserve our Republic, our religion, and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity.” Wilson invoked the assistance of God when asking for a declaration of war against Germany. When Bush41 issued a proclamation for a national day of prayer on November 2, 1990, he noted specifically the military actions in Kuwait and urged “the American people and their elected representatives to give thanks to God for His mercy and goodness and humbly to ask for His continued help and guidance in all our endeavors.”¹¹²

This conclusion is not intended to suggest that presidents do not use significant amounts of religious rhetoric during periods of war but is only intended to reference these specific addresses. Perhaps presidents felt State of the Union message addressing numerous issues did not need additional rhetoric due to an ongoing military conflict. Perhaps they felt messages addressing the war specifically and during war-related events were more appropriate for this rhetoric.

Themes

An examination of the State of the Union messages and Inaugural Addresses reveal recurring themes by presidents in their religious rhetoric. For example, in the State of the Union messages 24.2% of religious references consisted of rhetoric giving thanks to Providential blessings for past successes or favorable conditions existing in the country at the present time. As noted in the earlier examination of general versus specific references, many of the early addresses used general references to a deity. Thanks were extended to “Providence,” “Divine Providence,” “Heaven,” “the Supreme Ruler of Nations,” “the Author of all Good,” the Ruler of the Universe,” “the Supreme Ruler of

¹¹² John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=1926>, accessed March 26, 2009.

the Universe and Sovereign Arbiter of Nations” among others. As late as Rutherford B. Hayes and Chester A. Arthur, presidents were using general descriptions of a deity and expressing gratitude to the “Giver of All Good,” “Providence,” and “the Divine Being who holds in His hands the destinies of nations.” Recent presidents, however, have tended to utilize “God” exclusively.

Another recurring theme in State of the Union messages has been to implore the blessings of a deity for future events or conditions. Washington implored “that Being on whose will the fate of nations depends” to provide success for future endeavors. He would later implore “the Supreme Ruler of nations to spread his holy protection over these United States.” The content of these supplications has also changed over time. Contemporary presidents routinely close every State of the Union message with a statement seeking God’s blessing on the American people and the United States of America. Overall 21.2% of all instances of religious rhetoric in the State of the Union have been seeking future blessings or guidance.

Rhetoric that concerned religious freedom, liberty or tolerance has been another theme found in many messages. As noted elsewhere, the Framers and early presidents were cognizant of a history of religious persecution and intolerance that had resulted in Constitutional prohibitions on a religious test for office as well as establishment of a national religion. The American Constitution provided citizens could not be denied the right to freely exercise their religious beliefs. It was the duty of the “guardians of the public welfare” to “cherish institutions which guarantee...liberties, civil and religious” (Madison 1815). This commitment to religious freedom extended beyond American soil as well. Polk in his 1847 message noted that “commanders in the field” (during the

Mexican-American War) had been “directed scrupulously to respect their (Mexican citizens) religion, their churches, and their church property, which were in no manner to be violated...” Over 17.3% of all religious references were directed to issues of religious freedom, liberty or toleration.

The ultimate example of the use of religious rhetoric to address the issue of religious freedom can be found in Franklin Roosevelt’s 1939 message. Facing circumstances that were almost certain to result in a world engulfed in military struggle, FDR used the State of the Union to deliver what can be described as a sermon that tied religious freedom, democracy and international good faith together and made them inseparable. “Storms from abroad,” he said, were challenging “three institutions indispensable to Americans, now as always. The first is religion.” Religion, Roosevelt said, taught man “his relationship to God” and gave the individual “a sense of his own dignity” and taught him to “respect himself by respecting his neighbors.”

These three “indispensable” institutions—religion, democracy and international good faith—complemented and supported each other. They were linked, he said, because where “freedom of religion has been attacked, the attack” came “from sources opposed to democracy.” Further, when democracy had been overthrown “the spirit of free worship” had disappeared. Any attempt to relegate religion, democracy and good faith among nations to the background would not contain “the ideals of the Prince of Peace.” The United States, he said, rejected any such attempt and retained “its ancient faith.”

Men must be prepared to defend not just their homes but also the “tenets of faith and humanity...on which their churches, their governments and their very civilization are founded.” He went on to state: “The defense of religion, of democracy and of good faith

among nations is all the same fight. To save one we must now make up our minds to save all.” “God-fearing nations” could not stand idly by. Dictatorship involved costs “which the American people will never pay: The cost of our spiritual values . . . The cost of freedom of religion.”

The remaining religious references addressed a variety of issues. These have ranged from early concerns over polygamy and Native Americans to more recent pronouncements regarding school prayer and abortion.

[Insert Chart XXIII here]

Conclusion

While presidents have used religious rhetoric since the founding of our republic, it does appear that this use has become more frequent in recent presidents. One needs to resist the temptation to overreach the conclusions that can be drawn from this fact but it does appear that there have been periods of time throughout our history where presidents have used religious rhetoric more than in other periods. This may reflect the religious/political culture of the time or the religious beliefs of the individual president. It may have been used to spell out a particular vision for the country that was at least partially justified by an expression of “manifest destiny” or “American exceptionalism” guided by providential favor.

And while there can also be an argument that previous presidents have used religion and religious rhetoric to further their policy or electoral success I would suggest that strategy has been employed to a greater degree under Reagan and George W. Bush. Previous chapters have explored the religious foundations of both Reagan and Bush. I have also noted the significant influence exerted on Republican presidential politics by

the Christian Right. By their actions and their rhetoric I would assert that both Reagan and Bush consciously used religious rhetoric to capture and motivate the conservative Christian elements in the country to support their policies and their election. Sometimes their actions did not meet the level of their rhetoric. Reagan often spoke out in favor of prayer in schools and opposition to abortion but made no real attempt to pursue legislative remedies for either issue. George W. Bush did pursue a faith-based initiative and vetoed funding for embryonic stem-cell research but has not attempted to pursue other issues (abortion and same sex marriage) as vigorously as some in the movement would have liked. Their most notable contribution in terms of a lasting legacy on those issues is the appointment of conservative judges who have and will shape the Supreme Court for years.

2008

As a candidate for president, John Kennedy found it necessary to deliver a speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Alliance on September 12, 1960, discussing the role of religion in the performance of his duties should he be elected president. In this speech he argued that his membership in the Catholic Church should not and must not disqualify him from the presidency. In making his claim he relied on a rational and reasoned argument that his religion was not relevant. Kennedy noted that, among other issues, poverty in West Virginia and communism in Cuba were “the real issues which should decide this campaign. And they are not religious issues—for war and hunger and ignorance and despair know no religious barrier.”¹¹³

¹¹³ <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/JFK/JFK+Pre-Pres/Address+of+Senator+John+F.+Kennedy+to+the+Greater+Houston+Ministerial+Association.htm>, accessed December 13, 2007.

Forty-seven years later another candidate for president went to Houston to speak to persistent concerns about his religion. Mitt Romney's Mormonism raised serious apprehension among many Americans including evangelical Christians whose support is considered critical in the Republican nominating process. In a nationwide survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in August, 2007, one-fourth of Republican and Republican-leaning voters say they would be less likely to vote for a Mormon (Pew 4). But among white Republican evangelical Protestants, 36% expressed reservations about voting for a Mormon. That compares with 21% of white Catholic Republican voters and 16% of white non-evangelical Protestant Republicans. Whether his attempts to diffuse or at least diminish those concerns were successful is still open to debate. One report quoted a member of the board for the Iowa Christian Alliance who said he had problems with Mormonism and that he doubted Romney could say anything to change his opinion.¹¹⁴

What was striking about Romney's speech as compared to Kennedy's was the attempt by Romney to impose a religious test while arguing there should not be one. Kennedy chose not to defend or describe his religious views but simply asked that he be judged by his record in public office and promised to govern "in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest." Romney, in contrast, described some but not all of his most personal beliefs. The speech, one pundit noted, "reversed Kennedy's ringing affirmation of the American traditions of religious tolerance and the separation of church and state."¹¹⁵ Kennedy used his speech to dismiss and move beyond

¹¹⁴ Michael Luo, New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/07/us/politics/07romney.html>, accessed December 13, 2007.

¹¹⁵ David Kusnet, The New Republic, <http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=9372a07f-1d1c-4585-b0ee-b39f45b46be2&k=13531>, accessed December 13, 2007.

concerns regarding his Catholicism. Romney queried whether “there are any questions regarding an aspiring candidate’s religion that are appropriate.” And while Kennedy highlighted the Constitutional prohibition for a religious test to hold office found in Article VI, Romney responded that he believed there were appropriate questions regarding a candidate’s religion and he would “answer them today.” He answered only one. He stated that he believed Jesus Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of Mankind.

Romney faced the additional hurdle of numbers. While the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey indicated, for example, that there are nearly 51 million Catholics in America fewer than 3 million Americans self-identified themselves as Mormons. This was slightly less than those who indicated they were Muslim.¹¹⁶

The effectiveness of Romney’s appeal remains to be seen. His presidential campaign ended in failure but he was prominently mentioned as a possible vice-presidential candidate with John McCain. What does seem clear is that Kennedy’s Catholicism nearly cost him the election. One scholar has estimated that Kennedy lost about 1.5 million votes because of his religion. (Converse 1961 cited in Fowler et al. 2004 at p. 84) Given the closeness of the 1960 election it certainly seems plausible that had Kennedy not been successful in diffusing some of the animosity or concern over his religion the outcome might have been different.

Likewise, Barack Obama faced religious questions of his own in 2008. His long-time minister, Jeremiah Wright caused considerable controversy due to some comments he made regarding racism in America and September 11th. Obama first distanced himself

¹¹⁶ <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s0073.xls>, accessed December 13, 2007.

from Wright and finally disavowed his comments. Obama also contended with the persistent belief among many Americans that he is Muslim.¹¹⁷

One notable difference in 2008 was the willingness for both Democratic and Republican candidates for president to talk openly about their faith. John Kerry in 2004 showed a “visible discomfort in discussing religion” and was criticized for this hesitancy to publicly discuss private religious beliefs (Wilgoren and Keller 2004). Kerry would “belatedly” discuss his faith in an address to an evangelical audience at Pepperdine University in 2006 (Dart 2006).

However, both Obama and Hillary Clinton made no effort to shield discussions about their faith and devoted more time and attention to religious voters. Obama would engage in a ritual before major addresses by joining hands with campaign supporters and staff and pray. Clinton talked about “prayer warriors” who supported her and her campaign made sure that voters knew that she would host church picnics at the governor’s mansion in Arkansas.

In June, 2006, Obama gave a speech on faith at the Call to Renewal conference in Washington. His speech has been called what “may be the most important pronouncement by a Democrat on faith and politics since John F. Kennedy’s Houston speech in 1960 declaring his independence from the Vatican” and was described as “the first faith testimony I have heard from any politician that speaks honestly about the uncertainties of belief” (Dionne 2006).

In his address Obama recognized the power of religious rhetoric. He said “...secularists are wrong when they ask believers to leave their religion at the door before

¹¹⁷ <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/898/belief-that-obama-is-muslim-is-bipartisan-but-most-likely-to-sway-democrats>, accessed September 28, 2008.

entering into the public square. Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Williams Jennings Bryant, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King - indeed, the majority of great reformers in American history - were not only motivated by faith, but repeatedly used religious language to argue for their cause. So to say that men and women should not inject their 'personal morality' into public policy debates is a practical absurdity"¹¹⁸

In his keynote address at the 2004 Democratic convention that catapulted Obama into the national spotlight, he spoke of "God's greatest gift...a belief in things not seen..." He wrote in his book, *The Audacity of Hope*, that we should not "discount the role that values and culture play in addressing some of our most urgent social problems" and remarked that we "should never forget that God granted us the power to reason so that we would do His work here on Earth..." (World's AIDS Day Speech: Race Against Time).

By contrast, John McCain appeared to be reluctant to speak of his faith. "To Sen. McCain, faith is a private matter," [a campaign spokesman] said. "He believes that politicians or leaders shouldn't be judged on their religious beliefs but rather they should be judged on their preparedness to do the job."¹¹⁹ This combined with his position on certain issues such as stem-cell research made some Christian conservatives wary of supporting McCain (Townson 2008).

As the election approached, however, evangelicals appeared to be moving to McCain's column. Former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum noted part of the problem was that McCain "avoided the kind of rhetoric to which evangelical voters are attuned." Santorum said that McCain "...voted pretty much the right way, but he would

¹¹⁸ http://www.barackobama.com/2006/06/28/call_to_renewal_keynote_address.php, accessed September 28, 2008.

¹¹⁹ <http://pewforum.org/news/display.php?NewsID=16302>, accessed September 28, 2008.

not come out and speak to those issues.” Open opposition by conservative Christian leaders such as James Dodson softened as they compared McCain to Obama. McCain’s performance at Rick Warren’s “Compassion Forum” where he proclaimed life begins at conception and his selection of Sarah Palin, a hard line, pro-life candidate, as his running mate is often cited as contributing to this movement to McCain.¹²⁰

In the general election, Obama was able to do considerably better among voters from almost all religious categories. As the following Table indicates, Obama made gains among most groups of religious voters.

Table 5. Presidential vote by Religion 2000-2008

	2000 %		2004 %		2008 %		Democrat change: 04-08
	Gore	Bush	Kerry	Bush	Obama	McCain	
TOTAL	48	48	48	51	53	46	+5
Protestant/other Christian	42	56	40	59	45	54	+5
White Prot/other Christian	35	63	32	67	34	65	+2
Evangelical/Born- again	n/a	n/a	21	79	26	73	+5
Non-evangelical	n/a	n/a	44	56	44	55	0
Catholic	50	47	47	52	54	45	+7
White Catholic	45	52	43	56	47	52	+4
Jewish	79	19	74	25	78	21	+4
Other faiths	62	28	74	23	73	22	-1
Unaffiliated	61	30	67	31	75	23	+8

Source: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, “How the Faithful Voted,” <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=367>, accessed March 26, 2009. Note: throughout the report, “Protestant” refers to people who described themselves as “Protestant,” “Mormon,” or “other Christian” in exit polls.

¹²⁰ <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08251/910146-470.stm>, accessed September 28, 2008.

Obama also retained or improved over Kerry's 2004 support among people of all levels of religious observance. Forty-three percent of people who attend religious services regularly (once a week or more), supported Obama. In 2004, 39% of this group supported Kerry. Obama's biggest increase came in the subgroup who attends religious services most often - that is, *more* than once a week. Forty-three percent of this group supported Obama, compared to 35% who supported Kerry in 2004. These data suggest that Obama was successful at maintaining - and even increasing - electoral support among constituencies that historically support Democrats at very high rates (for example, those who identify themselves as rarely attending religious services and the religiously unaffiliated) while also making some gains among groups that have tended in recent years to be more supportive of Republican candidates (for example, white evangelicals and those who attend worship services on a regular basis). This success might be attributed to the fact he rejected the "fight-or-flight reaction to religion" and appealed directly to those voters often using the rhetoric of religion.

Obama

As noted in Chapter II, Obama's inaugural address contained seven religious references—more than George W. Bush's 2nd inaugural in 2005.

Obama referenced a scriptural passage familiar to many Christians when he alluded without reference to the passage from I Corinthians 13:11 that states "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (KJV). He spoke of the "God-given promise" of equality and freedom. He noted America was a "nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus and nonbelievers." This clause is notable because it is one of the few

references where a president dares to acknowledge publicly that there are “nonbelievers” among Americans.

Obama went on to state Americans had a sense of confidence in the “knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny” and had “God’s grace upon us.”

On February 24, 2009, Obama delivered an address to a joint session of Congress. Similar to other addresses made by recent presidents it was not technically a State of the Union address but was similar in content and tone. Obama used the occasion to address issues of the economy, his economic recovery plan and stimulus package and the ongoing war in Afghanistan and Iraq. In contrast to his inaugural address, Obama used only a single religious reference. He concluded with the now standard phrase “God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.”

Theoretical Significance

Over time we have seen the presidency eclipse the other branches of government in power, style and substance. This would probably come as a surprise to the Framers who envisioned the legislative branch as possessing the most power and direct connections with the people. While the powers of Congress were inscribed in some detail in Article I, § 8 of the Constitution, the powers of the president were much more general. This growth in presidential power and the resulting expectations of the American people has been defined as the “personal presidency.” Presidential scholars have examined this changing character of the presidency including Neustadt, Kernell, Tulis and Lowi.

In discussing how presidents have gained power, especially since the 1930s, Lowi states that the growth of the personal presidency has been due to the growth in the size of

the White House staff, the creation and importance of the Office of Management and Budget, the Joint Chiefs and the CIA. He also cites the trend to grant presidents ‘emergency powers.’ Beyond that, Lowi states that Americans have grown accustomed to big government and no longer see centralized power as a threat. Once big government was associated with a strong presidency it followed that democracy itself was redefined to bring it into closer consonance with president-centered government. (Lowi 1985, 8).

In evaluating the Reagan presidency, Lowi explains Reagan’s gain in performance ratings toward the end of his first term as being due to foreign relations or “international events associated with the president” (Lowi 1985, 15-16). In capitalizing on these events Reagan used the rhetoric of “fear.” His public pronouncements on domestic issues became more partisan and more “grandiose and rhetorical” on international matters. He evoked fear of an East-West conflict with the “evil empire” reference and advocacy of the “star wars” missile defense system. Lowi also cites the Soviet destruction of the Korean Air Lines plane, the bombing of the Marine compound in Beirut and the Grenada invasion as factors in revitalizing Reagan’s performance approval ratings (17).

Lowi cites the work of Clinton Rossiter in *The American Presidency*¹²¹ who defined the office of president in terms of the five roles he was expected to play: commander-in-chief, diplomat, chief executive, legislative leader and opinion/party leader. This study suggests we can now add a role as Pastor-in-chief.

Neustadt based his premise of presidential power on the foundation that for the American national government to be effective the presidency must be successful. For Neustadt, in order for the president to be successful he had to determine how each

¹²¹ Clinton Rossiter, *The American Presidency*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956), pp. 4-25.

decision would advance his power over the members of his administration, Congress and Congressional leaders, Washington elites and the American public. The president's 'power to persuade' could only be achieved by manipulating each constituency to his maximum advantage including the use of the constituency to manipulate the others (Neustadt 1990).

Lowi went on to add that the personal presidency was a "no-win situation" because the "harder presidents try to please their mass constituency, the more alienated that constituency becomes" (Lowi 1985, 11). Presidents must try to reduce this alienation. One method might be to use a rhetoric that resonates with the public. A president might seek a rhetoric that provides a common area of interest, a connection with the public on a level that incorporates but, at the same time, transcends politics.

Most presidential scholars agree that a "plebiscitary approach" to examinations of presidential leadership has been the primary theme for many years. The characteristics of this "plebiscitary presidency" include "aggressive assertions of executive independence, direct appeals to the people, active manipulation of public opinion, and, binding all these together, a new emphasis on rhetorical prowess" (Shogan 2003, 149). This "rhetorical prowess" might come from style, substance or both. FDR, Reagan and Clinton exhibited a personal charisma that included rhetoric that evoked a positive response from the American people. Bush41 failed in providing this rhetorical prowess and lost the presidency. Bush43 had limitations in rhetorical delivery but was the beneficiary of international events that rallied the American people and contributed to his re-election. He also used religious rhetoric to provide a bridge to many American voters.

Since presidents have been given expanded powers the expectations for success have also risen. The president has become the face and the voice of the American government. Citizens count on them to carry out their campaign promises. Modest success brings new, higher expectations. The American people identify with the president, seeing the presidency as “their own property.” This is the “personal presidency,” a position Lowi defines as “an office of tremendous personal power drawn from the people” (Lowi 1985, 20). It amounts to an establishment of a “direct and unmediated relationship between the president and the people.” But the personal presidency also brings “built-in barriers” to success and, perhaps, unrealistic expectations.

As noted, the religious rhetoric of early presidents was often general and tied to simple thanks or supplications. But it provided the foundation for the new religious rhetoric and the acceptance, perhaps expectation, that presidents will use religious rhetoric. Examples of religious rhetoric became accepted behavior, this behavior became customs and these customs became part of the character of a presidency that has assumed the vestments of a Pastor-in-chief. There is a new social contract—a new covenant—it cloaks the presidency and his policies in a coat of many colors, blessed by a God that resonates with the majority of Americans. This connection is important to the continuing legitimacy and stability of modern government. This new covenant ties the fate of government to the relative success of the presidency. Will Americans be more willing to accept that fate if it is tied by religious rhetoric to an idea that events and outcomes are divinely inspired or blessed?

In the United States Religious Landscape Survey (2008)¹²², the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life concludes that there is a connection between religious affiliation and attendance when it comes to attitudes on public issues and policy. Twenty-seven percent of Americans who attend religious services at least once a week say they rely principally on their religious beliefs to guide their thinking about politics.

We have seen the growth of a political culture infused with religion due to a number of social issues—school prayer, abortion, traditional family, stem cell research, same-sex marriage, etc. While he was not addressing a religious element to the personal presidency, Lowi asserted the “personality of the president” was “a combination of Jesus Christ and the Statute of Liberty: Bring *me* your burdens. Bring *me* your hopes and fears. Bring *me* your search for salvation” (Lowi 1985, 115. *Emphasis in original*).

A president walks a dangerous tight rope when he cloaks himself in religious rhetoric and adopts/advocates policies opposed by many people of faith. For example, Obama has talked openly about his faith. Many of his events, even those not overtly religious in nature, open with a prayer. But for some his policies do not match their conception of religious decision-making. This dichotomy (some might even label it hypocrisy) can contribute to an erosion of support from many people of faith. Writing recently in *The Washington Post*, Michael Gerson noted the controversy with Obama’s invitation to give the 2009 commencement address at Notre Dame. He points out that Obama made significant gains among Catholic voters in 2008 compared to Kerry’s 2004 results. However, Gerson asserts, Catholics are feeling increasingly betrayed by Obama’s initial positions on stem-cell research, overseas abortion funding and revision of

¹²² <http://religions.pewforum.org/>, accessed April 12, 2009.

standards related to personal conscience protections for pro-life health care workers.¹²³

Gerson cites a Pew Research survey that found the percentage of Americans who disapprove of Obama's job performance increased by nine points from February to March, 2009. Among Catholics, however, his disapproval rating jumped 14 points in this period. Among white, non-Hispanic Catholics, the percentage who disapproved of Obama's performance doubled – from 20 percent to 41 percent.¹²⁴

This study augments previous work on the presidency that shows increasing use of rhetoric appealing to the public instead of Washington elites. It ties into the theory of the personal president and illuminates the motivation and role of religious rhetoric in the speech of American presidents. Like the man behind the curtain in *The Wizard of Oz*, appearances become a major focus of efforts to understand the presidency. To win election and maintain popular support a president must continually appeal directly to the people, bypassing the Washington establishment. Once he has attained a base of popular support through the campaign and election process, he must do what he can do to maintain or expand that base. In contemporary America religion matters. Religious rhetoric matters. Presidents seek to transmit an aura of moral authority anchored in the rhetoric of religion. While symbolic rhetoric may be seen by some as merely “promoting and reinforcing partisan ideological beliefs” (Shogan 2003, 167), it appears presidents—Democrats and Republicans, liberal and conservative—will continue to use the language of religion.

¹²³ Michael Gerson, “Why Obama is Losing A Faith,” *The Washington Post*, April 1, 2009, page A21, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/31/AR2009033103201.html?sub=AR>, accessed April 4, 2009.

¹²⁴ The Pew Research Center for People and the Press, “Obama's Approval Rating Slips Amid Division Over Economic Proposals,” March 16, 2009, <http://people-press.org/report/498/obama-approval-slips>, accessed April 4, 2009.

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APPENDIX A

Coding Rules

Appendix A

CODING RULES

Sentences are counted separately. If a sentence contains one or more references it is counted as a single reference. If several references are contained in a single paragraph, however, each reference/sentence is counted separately.

Specific: references to the Bible, a Bible verse or chapter; or a quote from the Bible (whether specifically identified or not); referencing or quoting a religious hymn; references to “God,” “Christ” or “Christianity.” Also references to other specific religious faiths, i.e. “Islam” or “Muslim.”

Policy-related: references that mention a specific policy or program and are couched in religious terms or use a religious basis for the policy or initiative.

General: references to “Providence,” “a higher power” or other similar language without a specific reference to a particular religious foundation or source (Bible, scripture, hymn, etc.)

APPENDIX B

**Bibles and Scripture Passages Used by Presidents
in Taking the Oath of Office**

Appendix B

Bibles and Scripture Passages Used by Presidents in Taking the Oath of Office

PRESIDENT	DATE	EDITION
George Washington	1789	Genesis 49:13 ¹ (Masonic Bible); opened at random due to haste
George Washington	1793	Not known
John Adams	1797	Not known
Thomas Jefferson	1801, 1805	Not known
James Madison	1809, 1813	Not known
James Monroe	1817, 1821	Not known
John Q. Adams	1825	Not known
Andrew Jackson	1829, 1833	Not known
Martin Van Buren	1837	Proverbs 3:17 ²
William H. Harrison	1841	Not known
John Tyler	1841	Not known
James K. Polk	1845	Not known
Zachary Taylor	1849	Not known
Millard Fillmore	1850	Not known
Franklin Pierce	1853	Affirmed instead of swearing the

		oath; did not kiss Bible
James Buchanan	1857	Not known
Abraham Lincoln	1861	Opened at random
Abraham Lincoln	1865	Matthew 7:1; 18:7; Revelations 16:7 ³
Andrew Johnson	1865	Proverbs 21
Ulysses S. Grant	1869	Not known
Ulysses S. Grant	1873	Isaiah 11:1-3 ⁴
Rutherford B. Hayes	1877	Privately, no Bible; publicly, Psalm 118:11-13 ⁴
James A. Garfield	1881	Proverbs 21:1 ^{4,5}
Chester A. Arthur	1881	Privately, no Bible; Psalm 31:1-3 ^{4,5}
Grover Cleveland	1885	Psalm 112:4-10; Bible opened by Chief Justice and by chance it fell to this Psalm ⁶
Benjamin Harrison	1889	Psalm 121:1-6 ⁴
Grover Cleveland	1893	Psalm 91:12-16 ⁴
William McKinley	1897	II Chron. 1:10; Bible given to him by Methodist church congregation ⁷
William McKinley	1901	Proverbs 16 ⁴
Theodore Roosevelt	1901	No Bible

Theodore Roosevelt	1905	James 1:22-23 ⁴
William Howard Taft	1909	I Kings 3:9-11 ⁴
Woodrow Wilson	1913	Psalm 119 ⁴
Woodrow Wilson	1917	Privately, not known; publicly, Psalm 46 ⁸
Warren G. Harding	1921	Micah 6:8 (Washington Bible) ⁴
Calvin Coolidge	1923	Not known
Calvin Coolidge	1925	John 1
Herbert C. Hoover	1929	Proverbs 29:18 ⁴
Franklin D. Roosevelt	1933, 1937, 1941, 1945	I Corinthians 13 ⁴
Harry S. Truman	1945	Closed Bible held in left hand; right hand on upper cover ⁹
Harry S. Truman	1949	Matthew 5:3-11 and Exodus 20:3- 17 ¹⁰
Dwight D. Eisenhower	1953	Psalm 127:1 (Washington Bible) and II Chronicles 7:14 (West Point Bible) ¹¹
Dwight D. Eisenhower	1957	Privately, not known; publicly, Psalm 33:12 ¹² (West Point Bible)
John F. Kennedy	1961	Closed Bible ¹³
Lyndon B. Johnson	1963	Missal ¹⁴

Lyndon B. Johnson	1965	Closed family Bible ¹⁵
Richard M. Nixon	1969, 1973	Two family Bibles, both open to Isaiah 2:4 ¹⁶
Gerald R. Ford	1974	Proverbs 3:5-6 ¹⁷
James E. Carter	1977	Family Bible open to Micah 6:8 ¹⁸
Ronald W. Reagan	1981, 1985	Mother's Bible open to II Chronicles 7:14 ¹⁹ (Both privately and publicly in 1985)
George H. W. Bush	1989	Washington's Masonic Bible opened at random in the center; family Bible on top opened to Matthew 5
William J. Clinton	1993	King James Bible, given to him by grandmother, open to Galatians 6:8
William J. Clinton	1997	King James Bible, given to him by grandmother, open to Isaiah 58:12 ²⁰
George W. Bush	2001	Closed family Bible ²¹
George W. Bush	2005	Family Bible, open to Isaiah 40:31 ²²
Barack Obama	2009	Closed Lincoln Inaugural Bible ²³
NOTES		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bowen, Clarence W. <i>The History of the Centennial Celebration of the Inauguration of George Washington</i>, N.Y. 1892, p. 72, Illustration. 2. Listed in the files of Legislative Reference Service, Library of Congress, 		

source not given.

3. Wright, John. *Historic Bibles in America*, N.Y. 1905, p. 46
4. List compiled by Clerk of the Supreme Court, 1939.
5. One source (*The Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 23, 1881, p. 5) says that Garfield and Arthur used the same passage, but does not indicate which one.
6. Hutchins, Stilson. *The National Capitol*, Washington, 1885, p. 276.
7. *Harper's Magazine*, August 1897.
8. .Senate Document 116, 65th Congress, 1st Session, 1917.
9. *New York Times*, Apr. 13, 1945, p. 1, col. 7.
10. *Facts on File*, Jan. 16-22, 1949, p. 21.
11. *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1953, p. 19.
12. *New York Times*, Jan. 22, 1957, p. 16.
13. *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1961, p. 8, col. 1.
14. Mooney, Booth. *The Lyndon Johnson Story*, p. 1.
15. Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court via phone July 1968.
16. *Washington Post*, Jan. 20, 1969, p. A1.
17. *New York Times*, Aug. 10, 1974, p. A1.
18. *Washington Post*, Jan. 21, 1977, p. A17.
19. White House Curator's Office.
20. *Washington Post*, Jan. 21, 1997, p. A14.
21. Inauguration staff. George W. Bush had hoped to use the Masonic Bible that had been used both by George Washington in 1789, and by the President's father, George H. W. Bush, in 1989. This historic Bible had been transported, under guard, from New York to Washington for the inauguration but, due to inclement weather, a family Bible was substituted instead.
22. <http://inaugural.senate.gov/history/chronology/gwbush2005.htm>, accessed October 5, 2007.
23. <http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2008/08-236.html>, accessed February 13, 2009.

Above chart, with the exception of information related to George W. Bush's second inaugural, and the Obama inaugural were obtained from <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/pihome.html>, accessed August 10, 2007.

Appendix C

**Memo from Governor George Bush
to Governor's Staff**



STATE OF TEXAS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GEORGE W. BUSH
GOVERNOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: Hard Working Staff Members
FROM: Governor
DATE: April 3, 1995

I thought I would share with you a recent bit of Texas history which epitomizes our mission.

My very close personal friend from Midland, Texas, Joe I. O'Neill, III, recently loaned me a portrait entitled "A Charge to Keep" by W. H. D. Koerner. This beautiful painting will hang on my wall for the next four years.

The reason I bring this up is that the painting is based upon the Charles Wesley hymn "A Charge to Keep I Have". I am particularly impressed by the second verse of this hymn. The second verse goes like this:

"To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill;
O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!"

This is our mission. This verse captures our spirit.

Joe was inspired to make this generous loan during the church service preceding the inaugural ceremonies. It was in this church service when we sang the hymn "A Charge to Keep I Have".

When you come into my office, please take a look at the beautiful painting of a horseman determinedly charging up what appears to be a steep and rough trail. This is us. What adds complete life to the painting for me is the message of Charles Wesley that we serve One greater than ourselves.

Thank you for your hard work. Thank you for your service to our State. God bless Texas!

Appendix D

Charts and Chart Numbering Guide

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Chart I Inaugural Addresses—Word Length

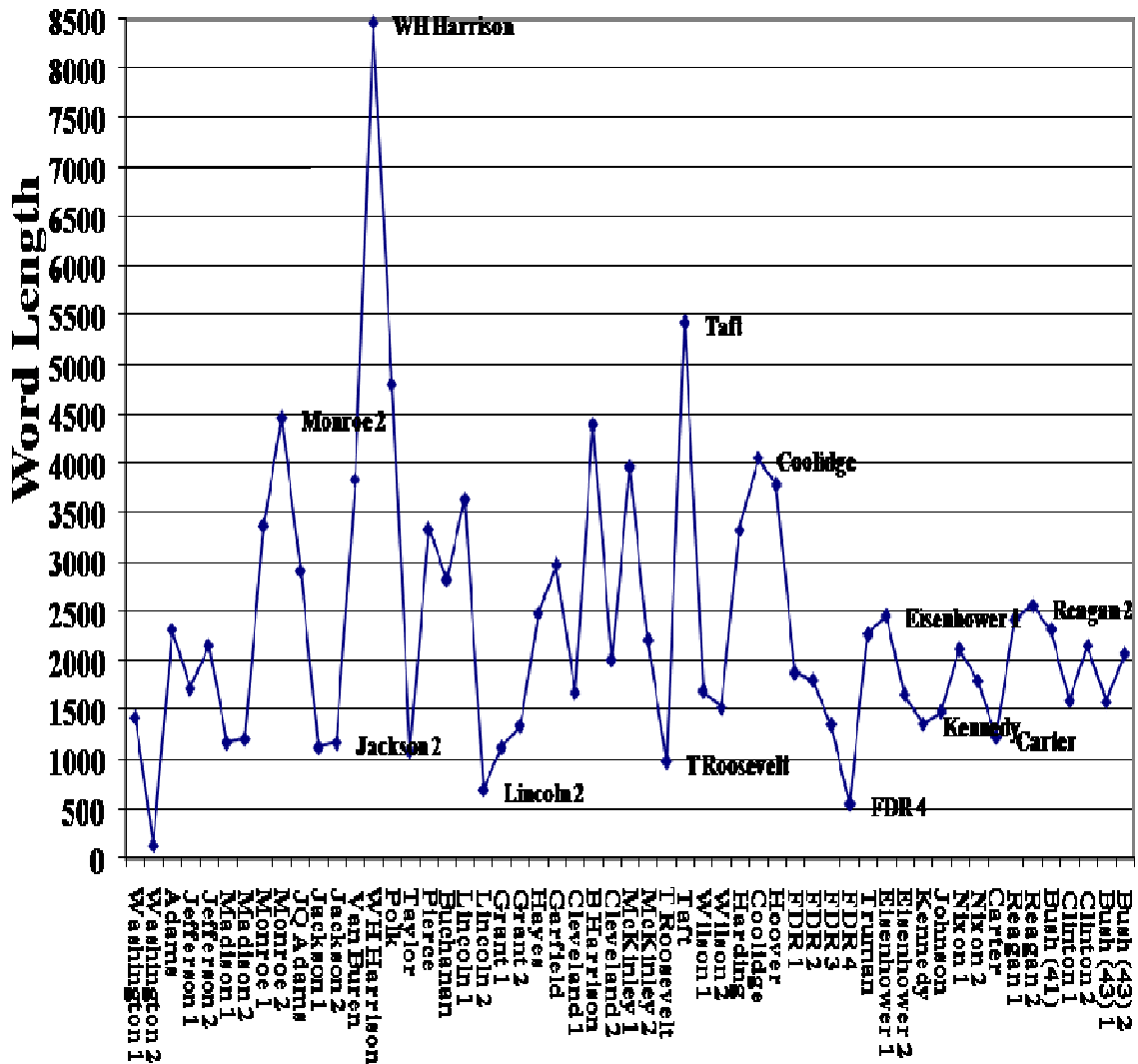


Chart II
Inaugural Addresses—George Washington to George W. Bush
Total Use of Religious Rhetoric

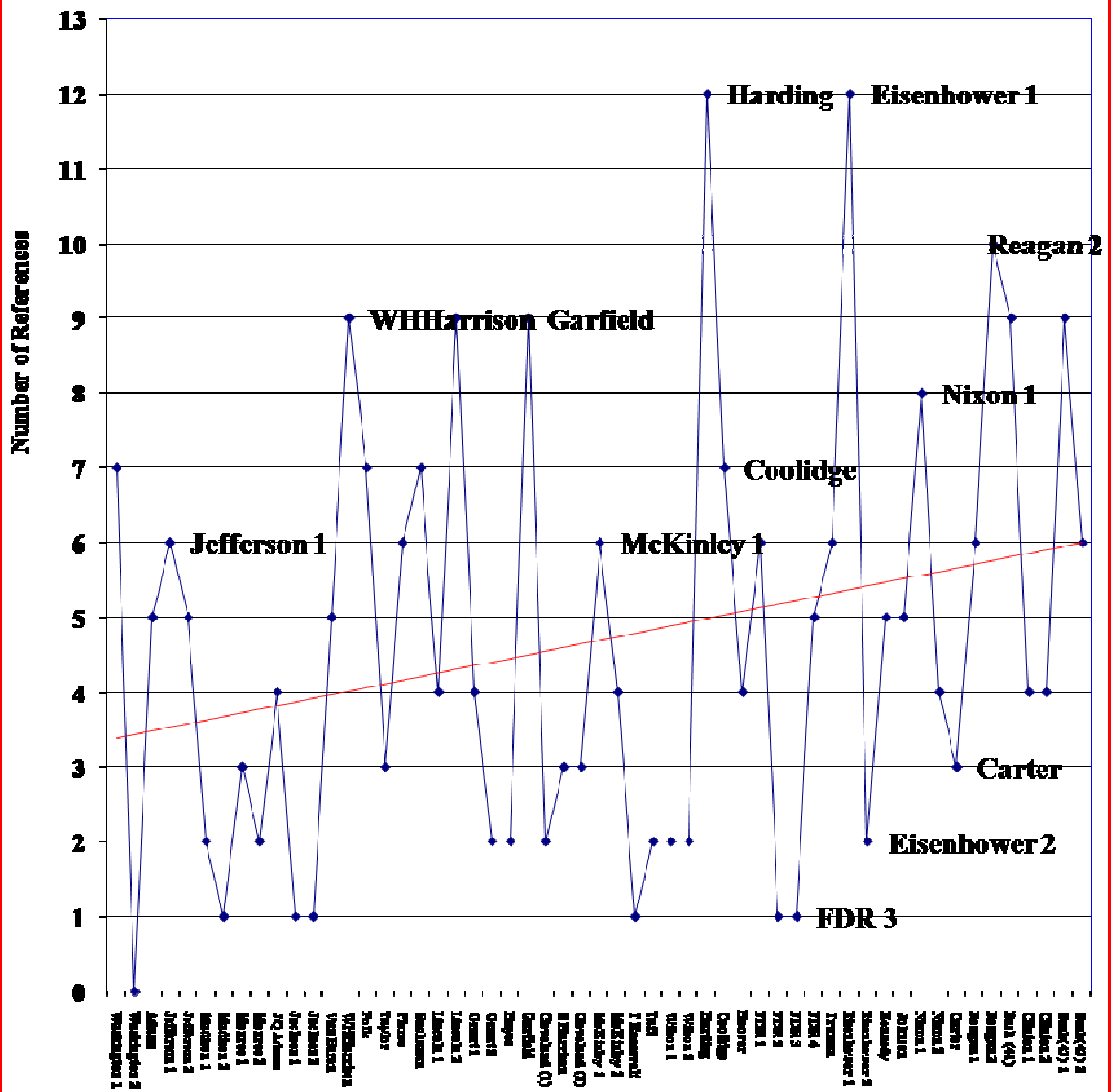


Chart III
Inaugural Addresses
Use of General Religious Rhetoric

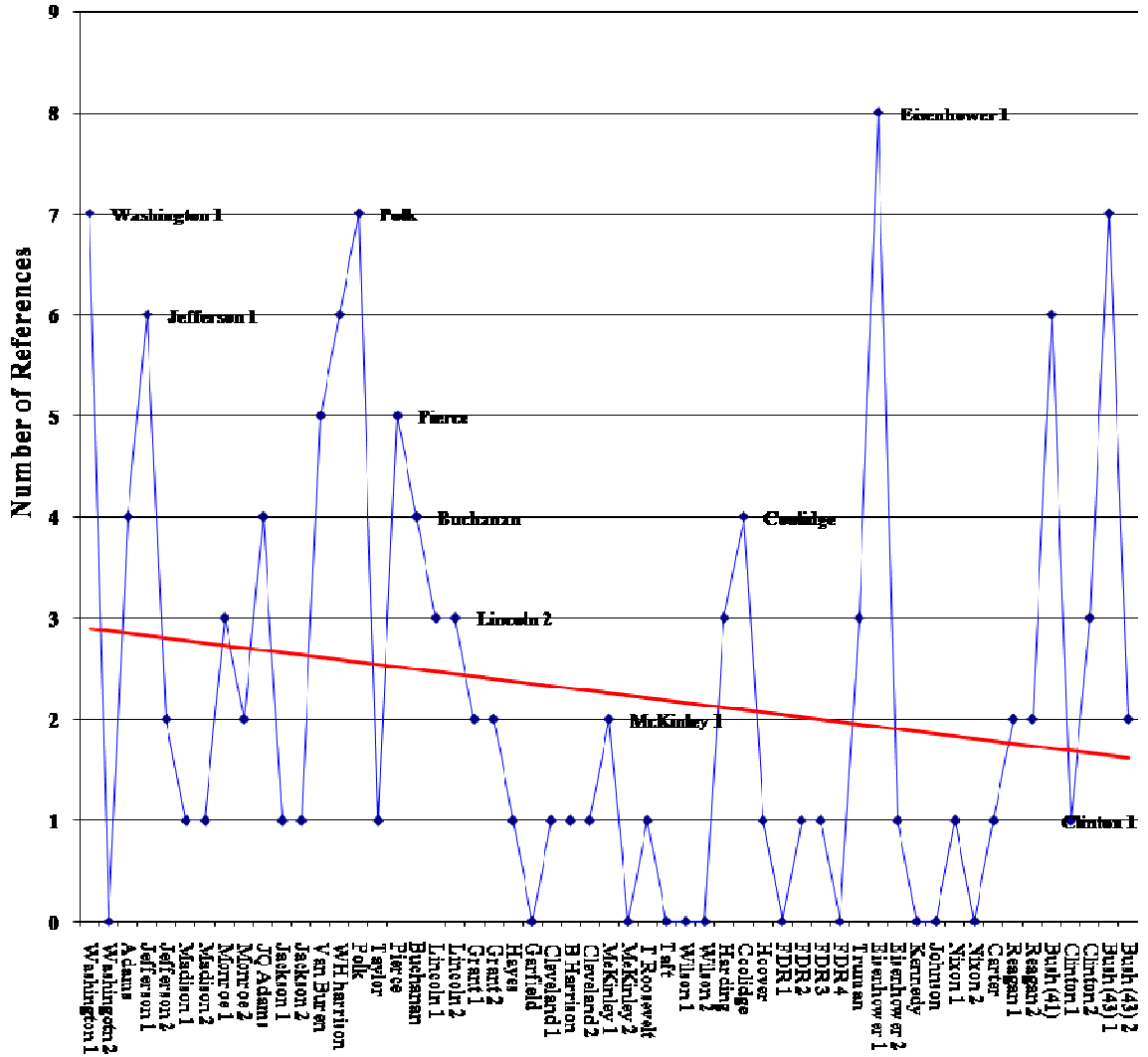


Chart IV
Inaugural Addresses
Policy-related religious rhetoric

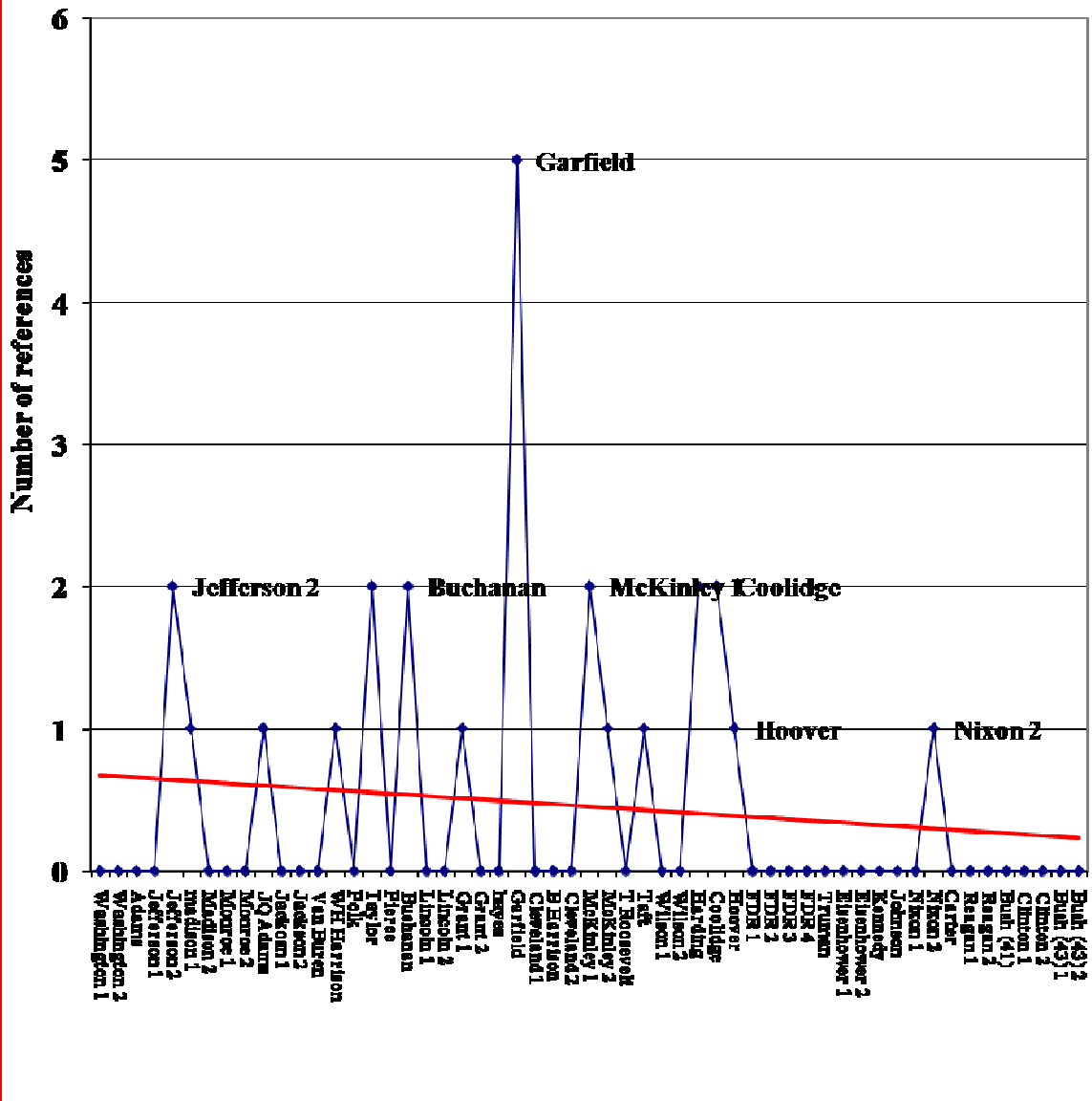


Chart V
Inaugural Addresses
Use of Specific Religious Rhetoric

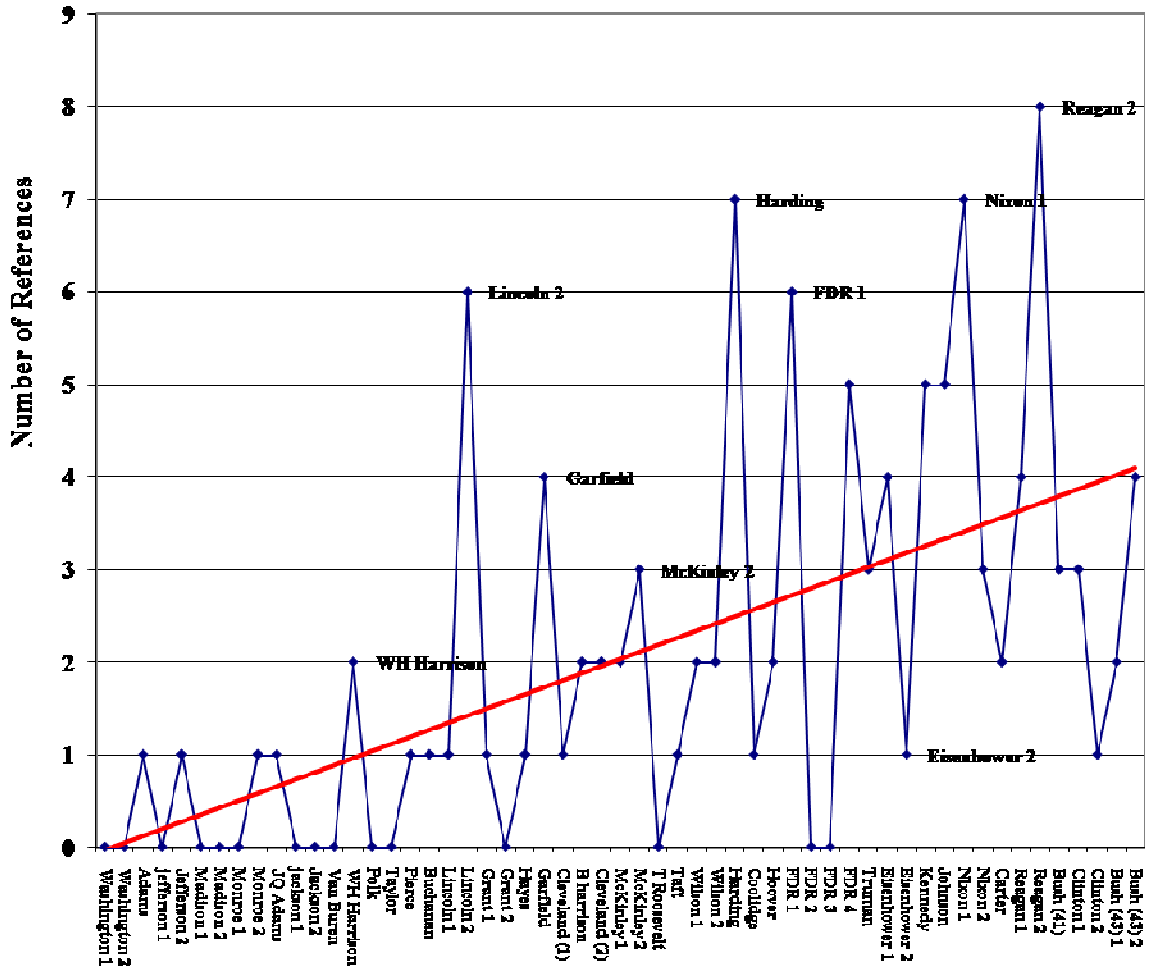
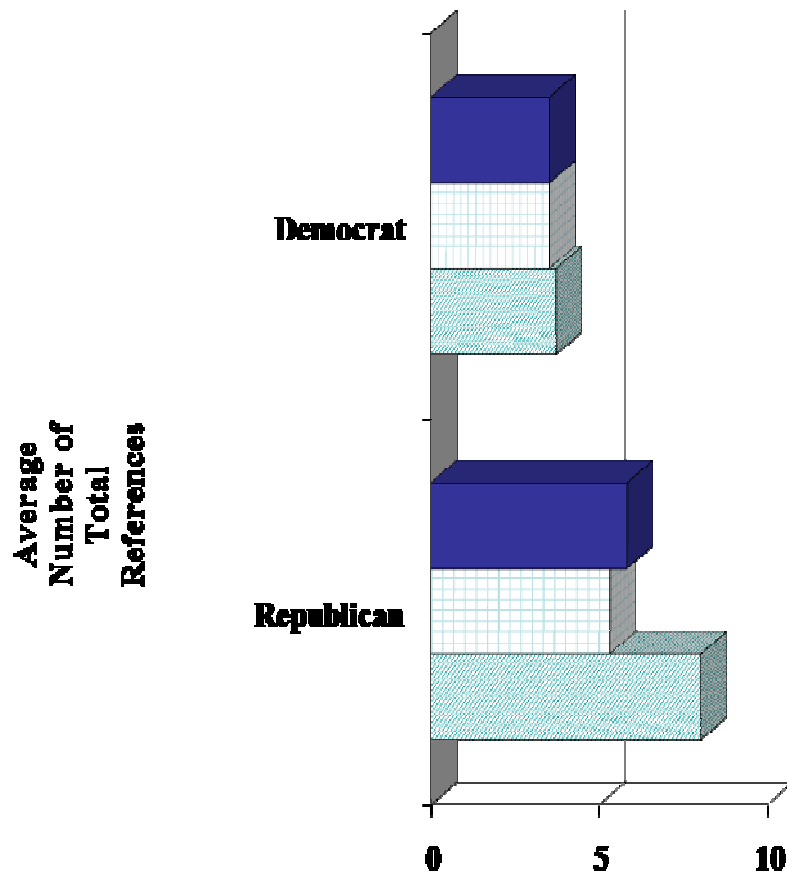
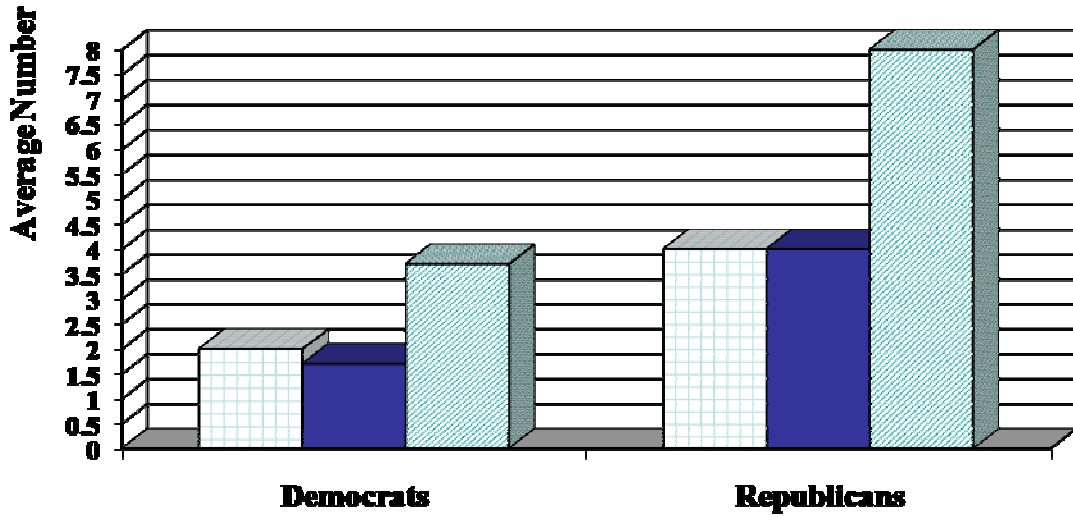


Chart VI
Total Use of Religious Rhetoric
Inaugural Addresses



	Republican	Democrat
■ 1905-1973	5.8	3.5
□ 1861-1973	5.3	3.5
▨ 1977-2008	8	3.7

Chart VII
Use of Religious Rhetoric in Inaugural Addresses After 1973
Democrat vs. Republican



Specific
 General
 Total

Chart VIII
Total Use of Religious Rhetoric
in Second Inaugurals

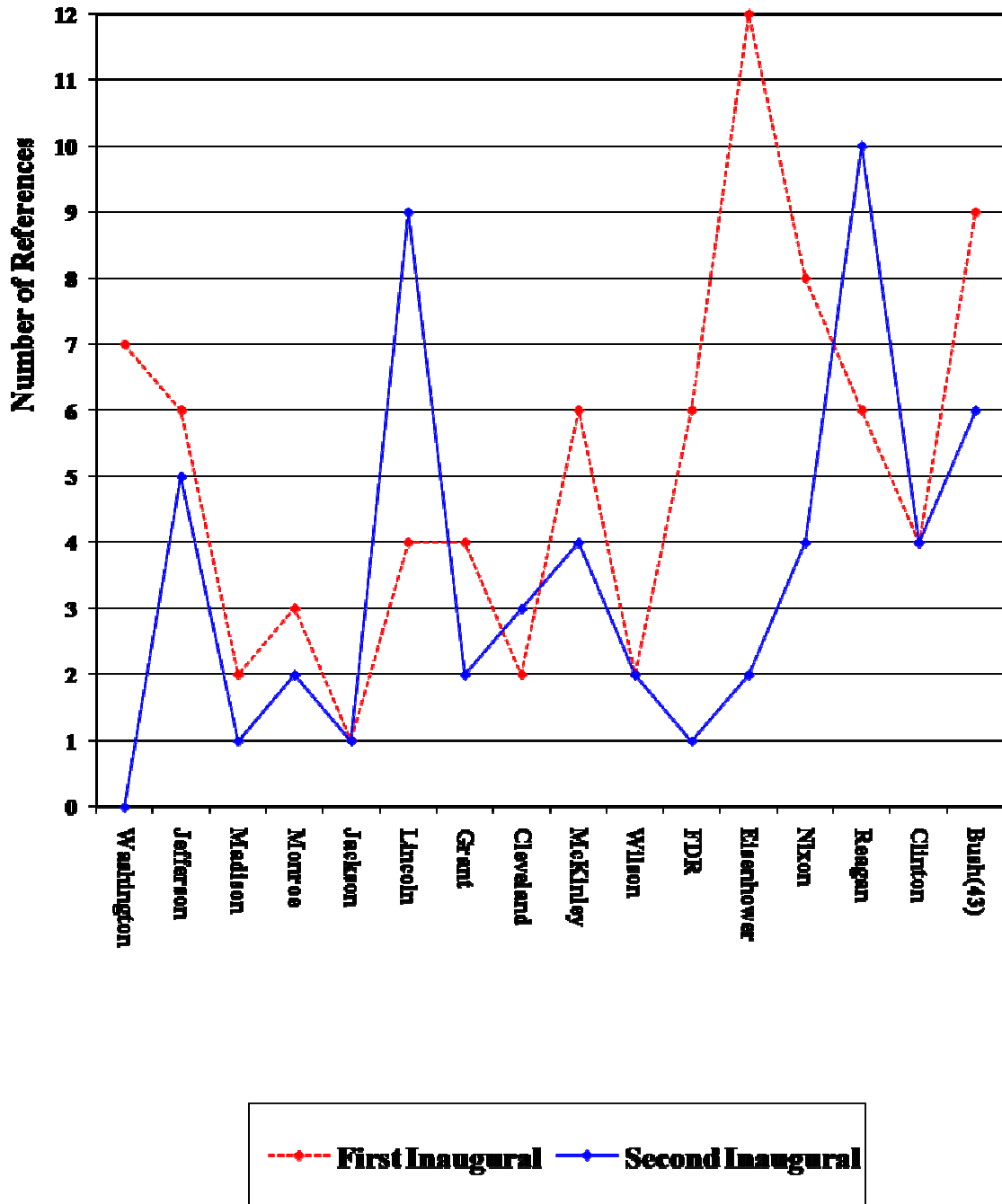
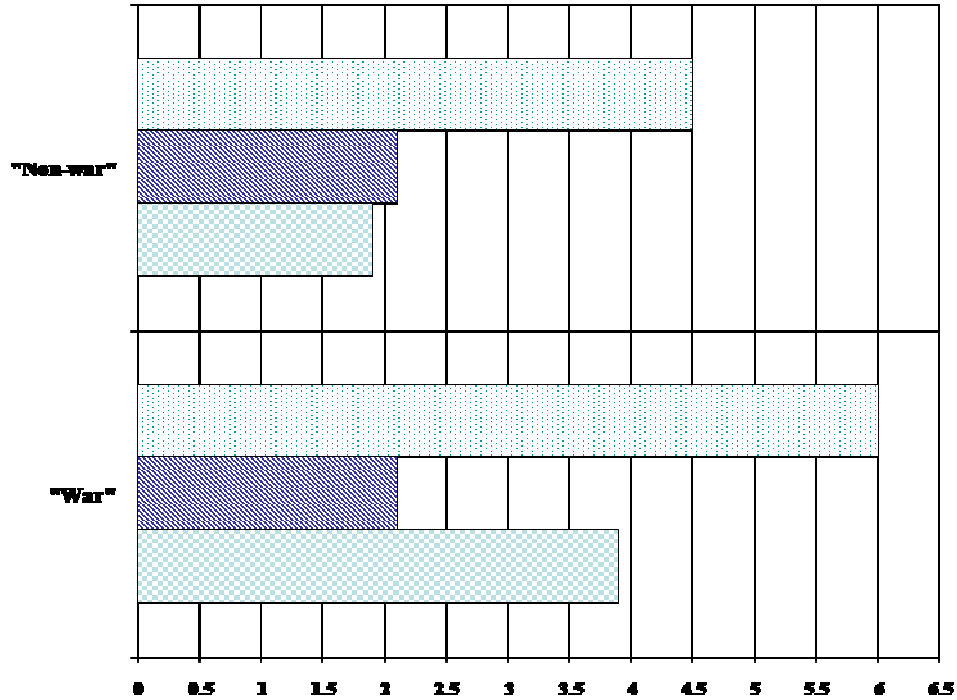


Chart IX
Religious rhetoric during periods of war
Inaugural Addresses



	"War"	"Non-war"
☐ Total	6	4.5
▨ General	2.1	2.1
☐ Specific	3.9	1.9

Number of References:

“War” inaugural addresses include: Madison’s second in 1813, Lincoln’s second in 1865, Wilson’s second in 1917, FDR’s fourth in 1945, Eisenhower’s first in 1953, George W. Bush’s second in 2005, and Obama’s in 2009.

Chart X
State of the Union -- Word Length

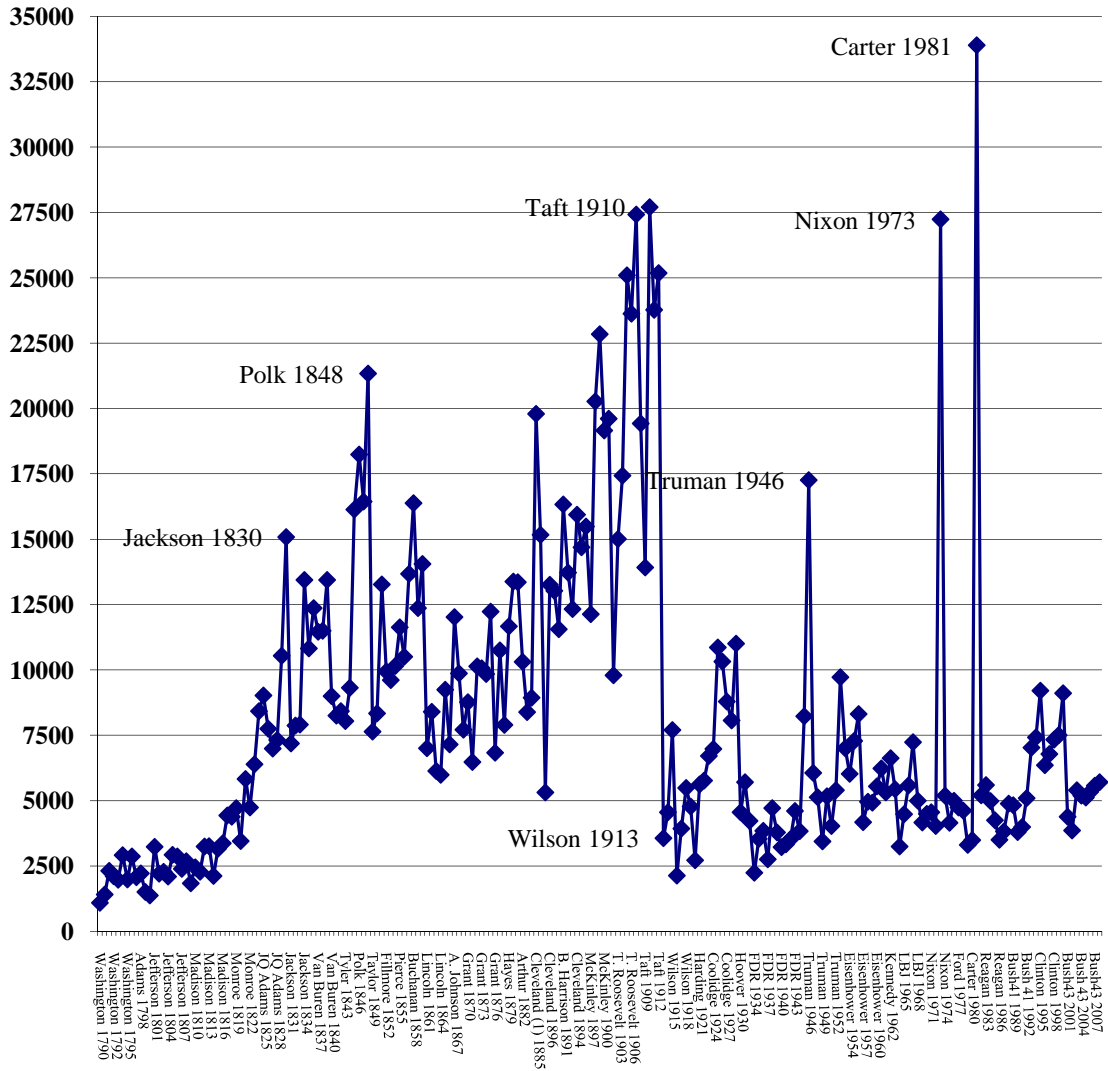


Chart XI
State of the Union--Total Use of Religious Rhetoric

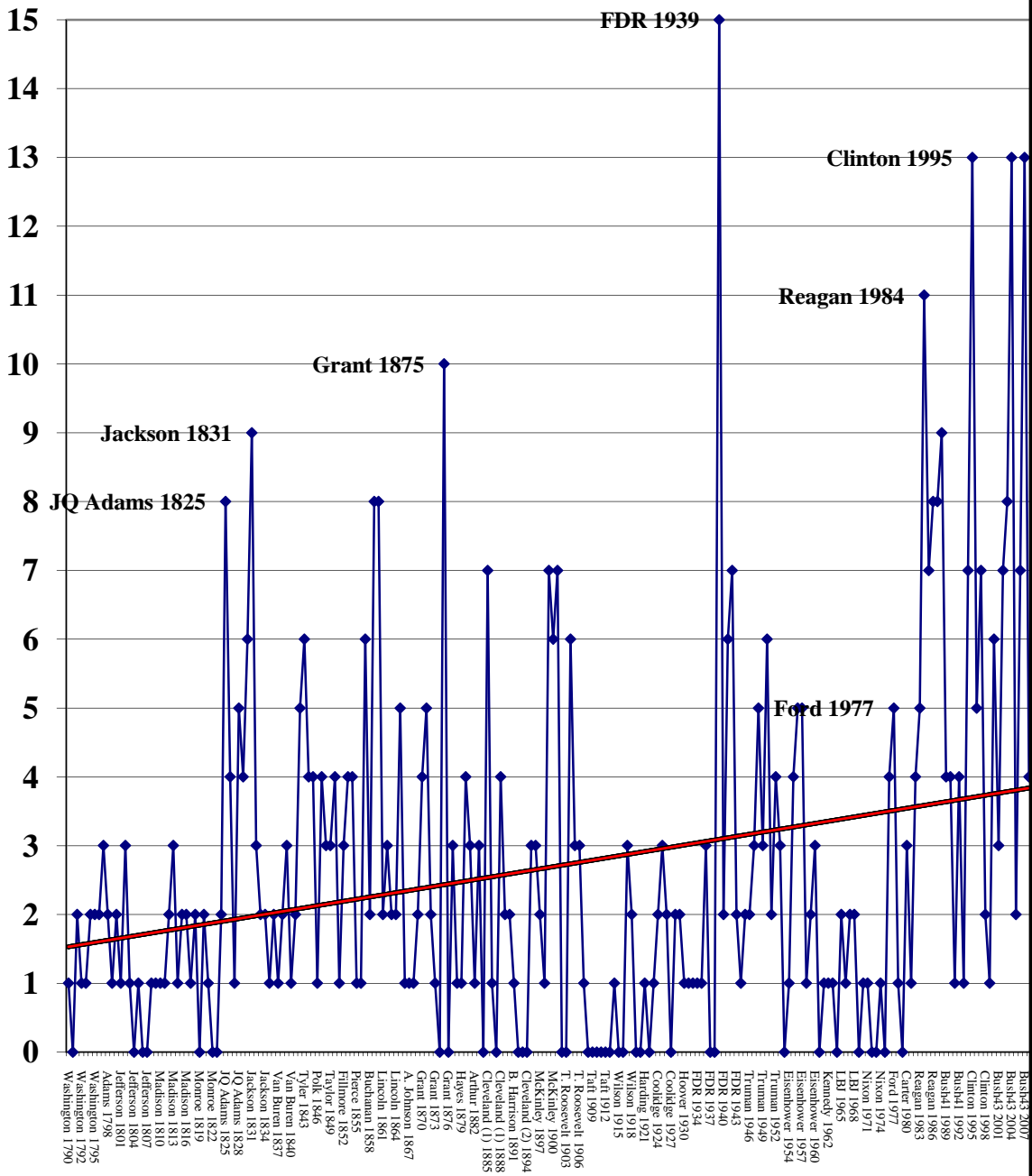
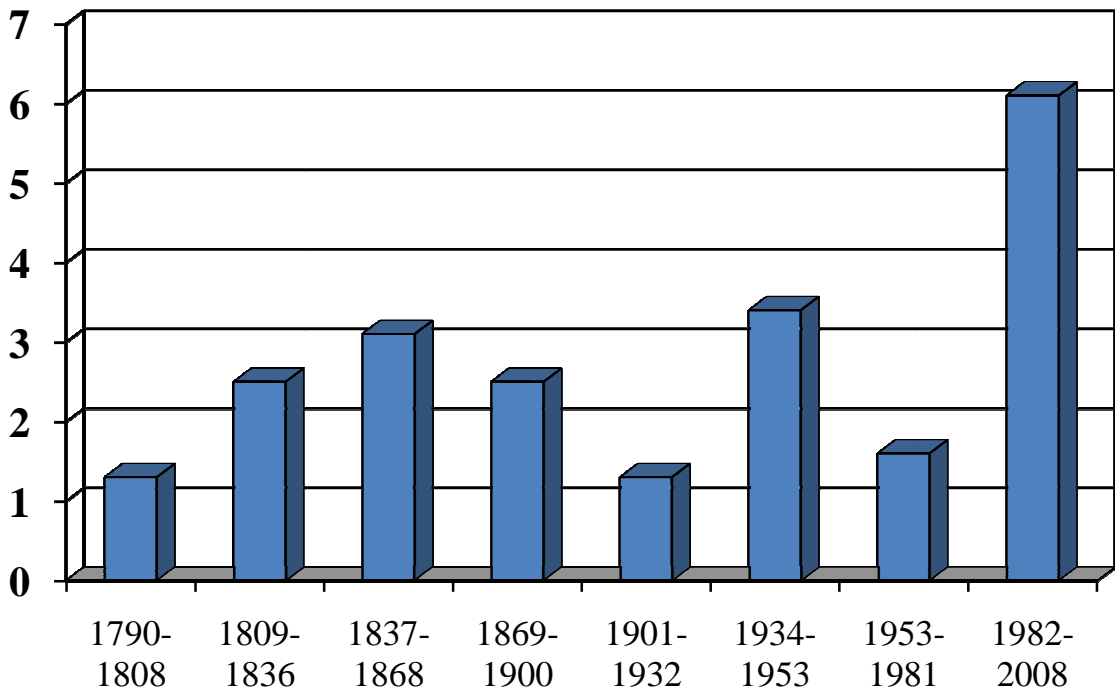
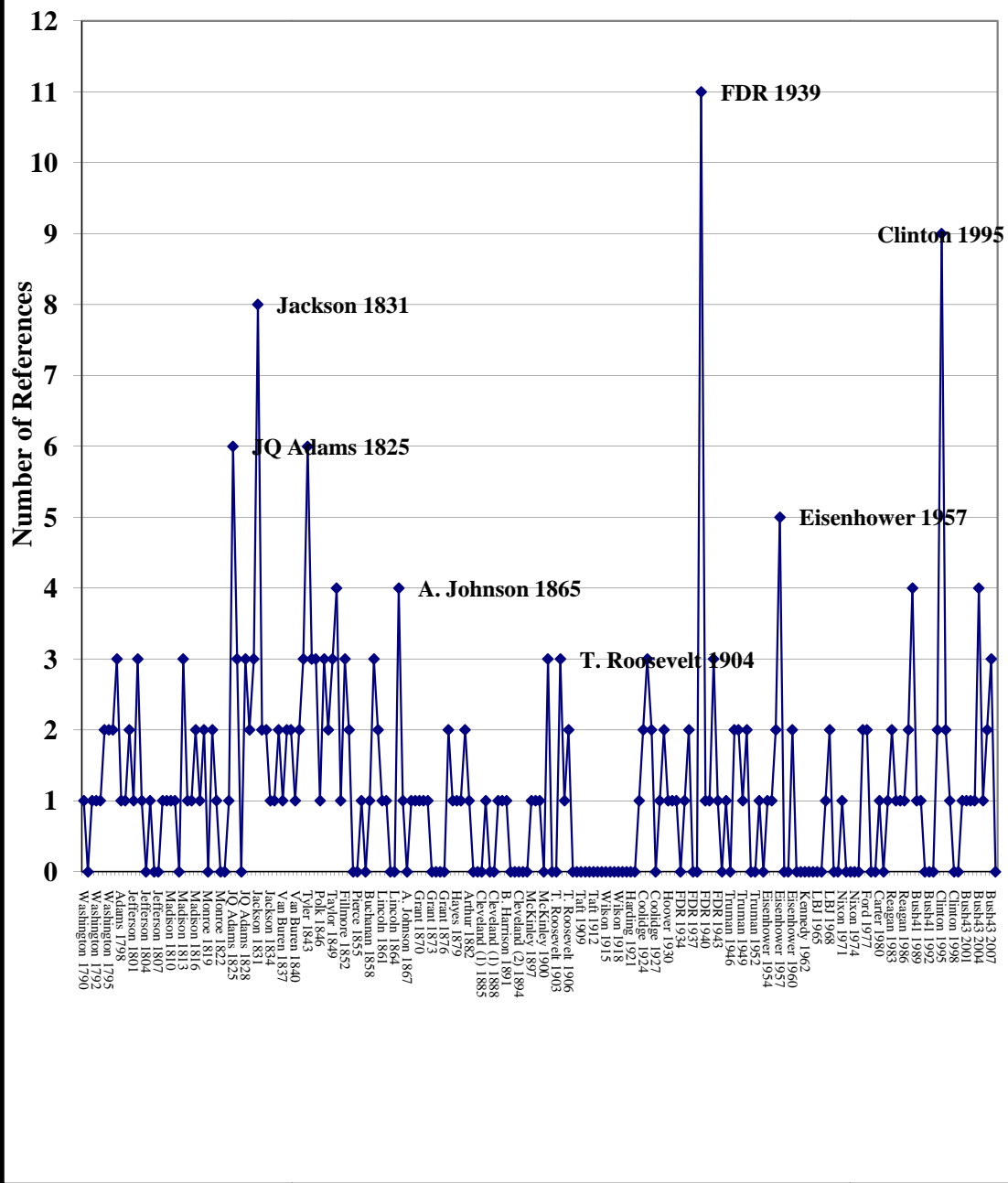


Chart XII
State of the Union messages
Cycles of Religious Rhetoric



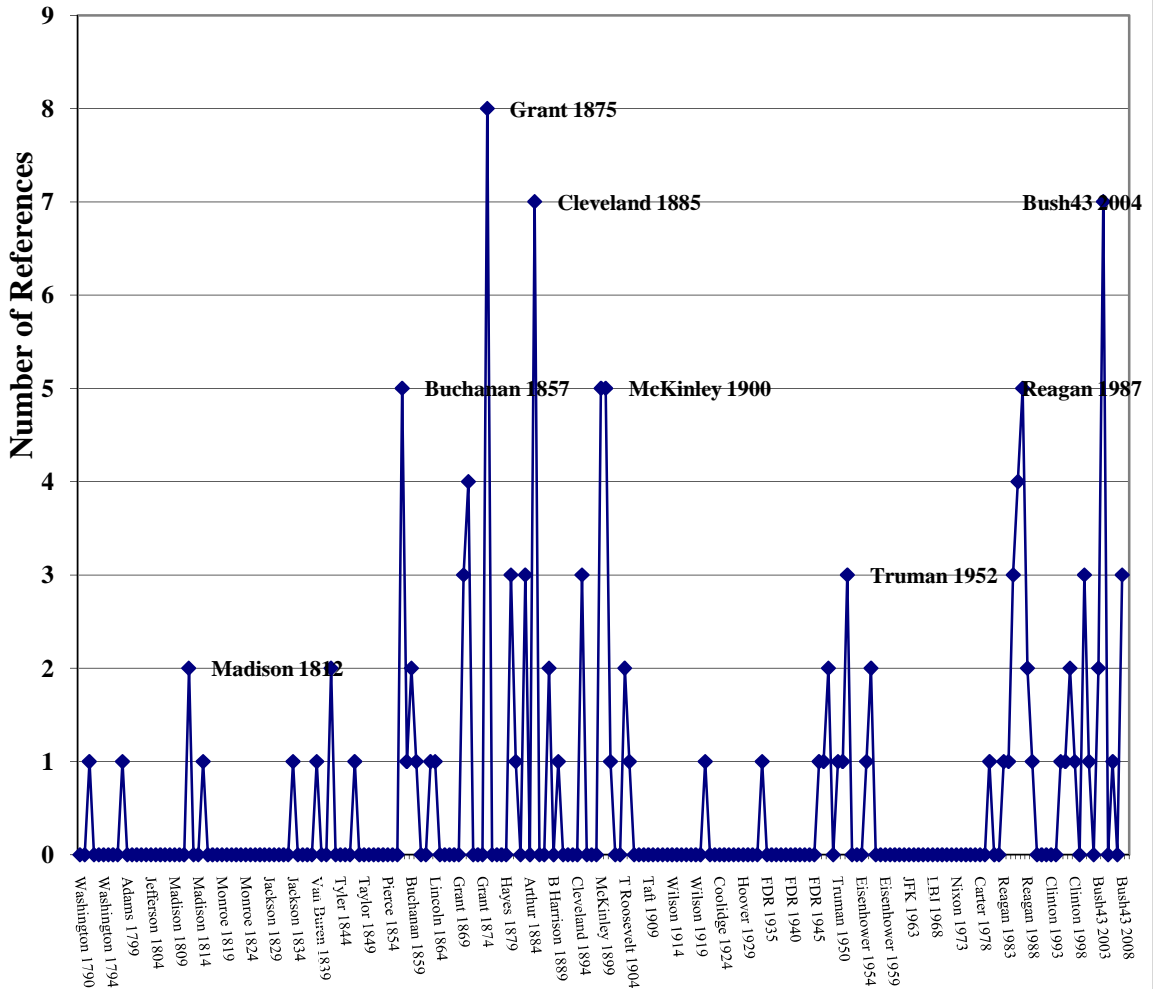
Average number of religious references

Chart XIII
State of the Union--Use of General Religious Rhetoric



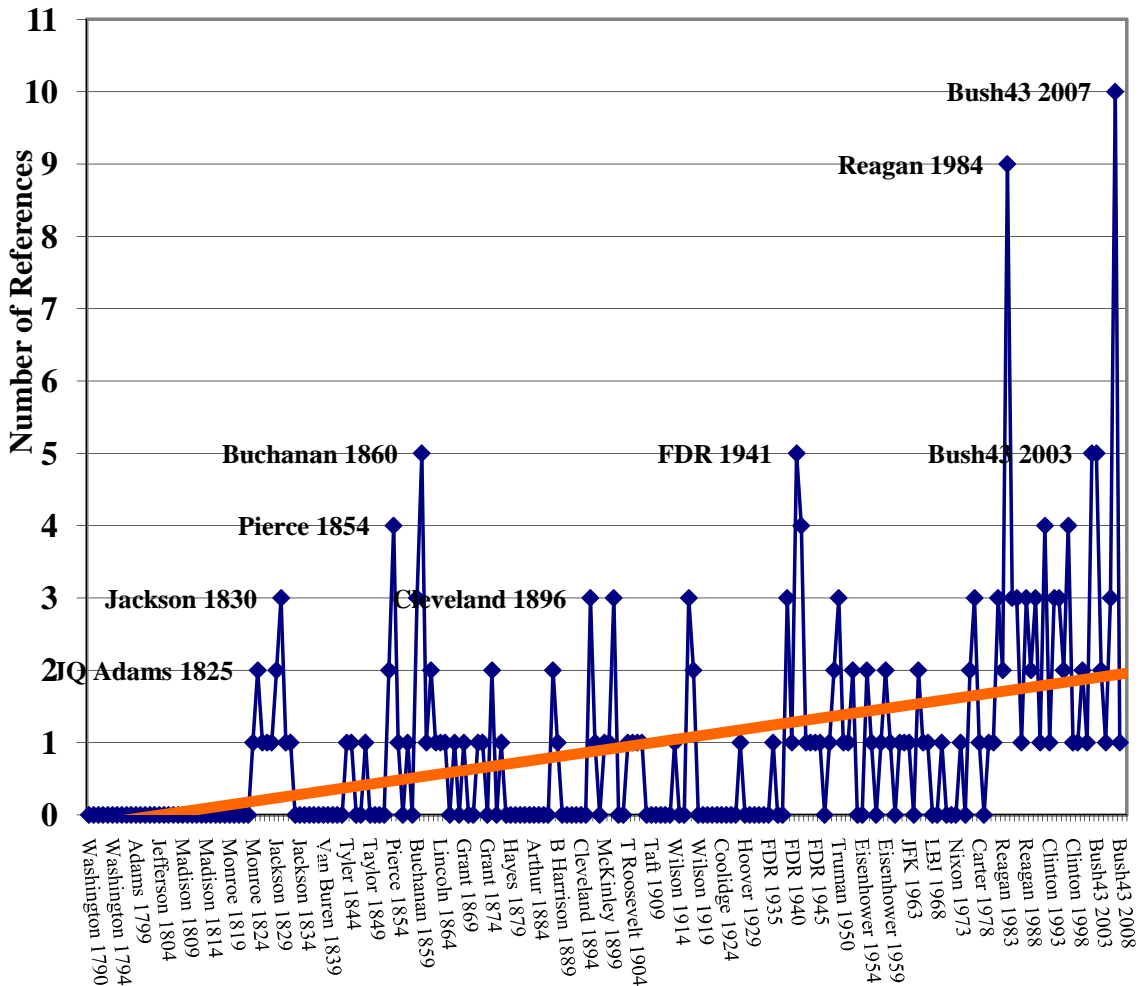
General: references to “Providence,” “a higher power” or other similar language without a specific reference to a particular religious foundation (Bible, scripture, hymn, etc.)
 Trend line shows average usage has decreased slightly.

Chart XIV
State of the Union
Use of Policy-related Religious Rhetoric



Policy-related: references that mention a specific policy or program and are couched in religious terms or use a religious basis for the policy or initiative.

Chart XV
State of the Union
Use of Specific Religious Rhetoric



Specific: references to the Bible, a Bible verse or chapter, or a quote from the Bible (whether specifically identified or not); referencing or quoting a religious hymn; references to “God,” “Christ” or “Christianity.” Also references to other specific religious faiths, i.e. “Islam” or “Muslim.”

Chart XVI
State of the Union--Total Use of Religious Rhetoric
1861-2008

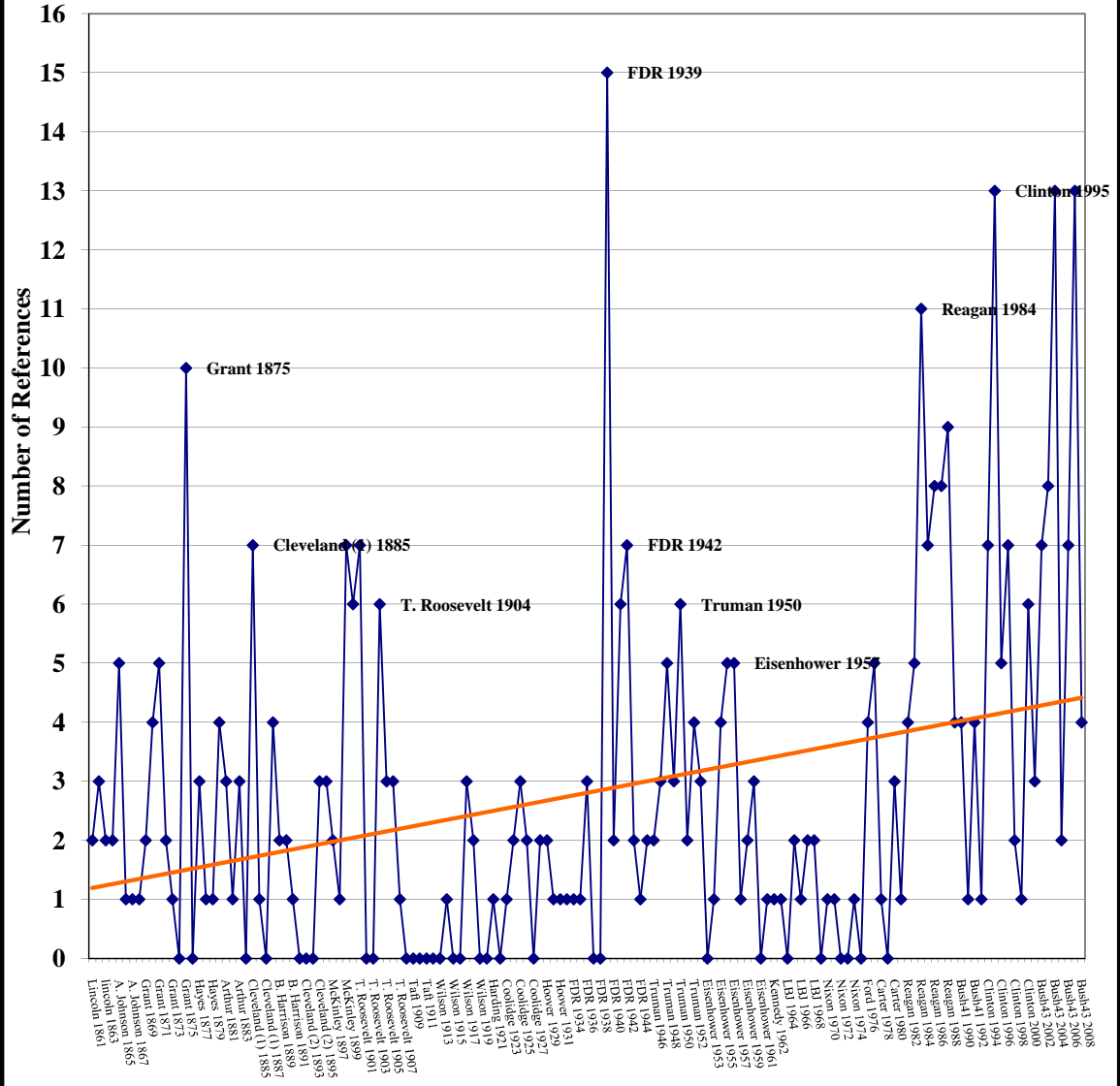


Chart XVII
Use of Religious Rhetoric in the State of the Union
Teddy Roosevelt to George W. Bush

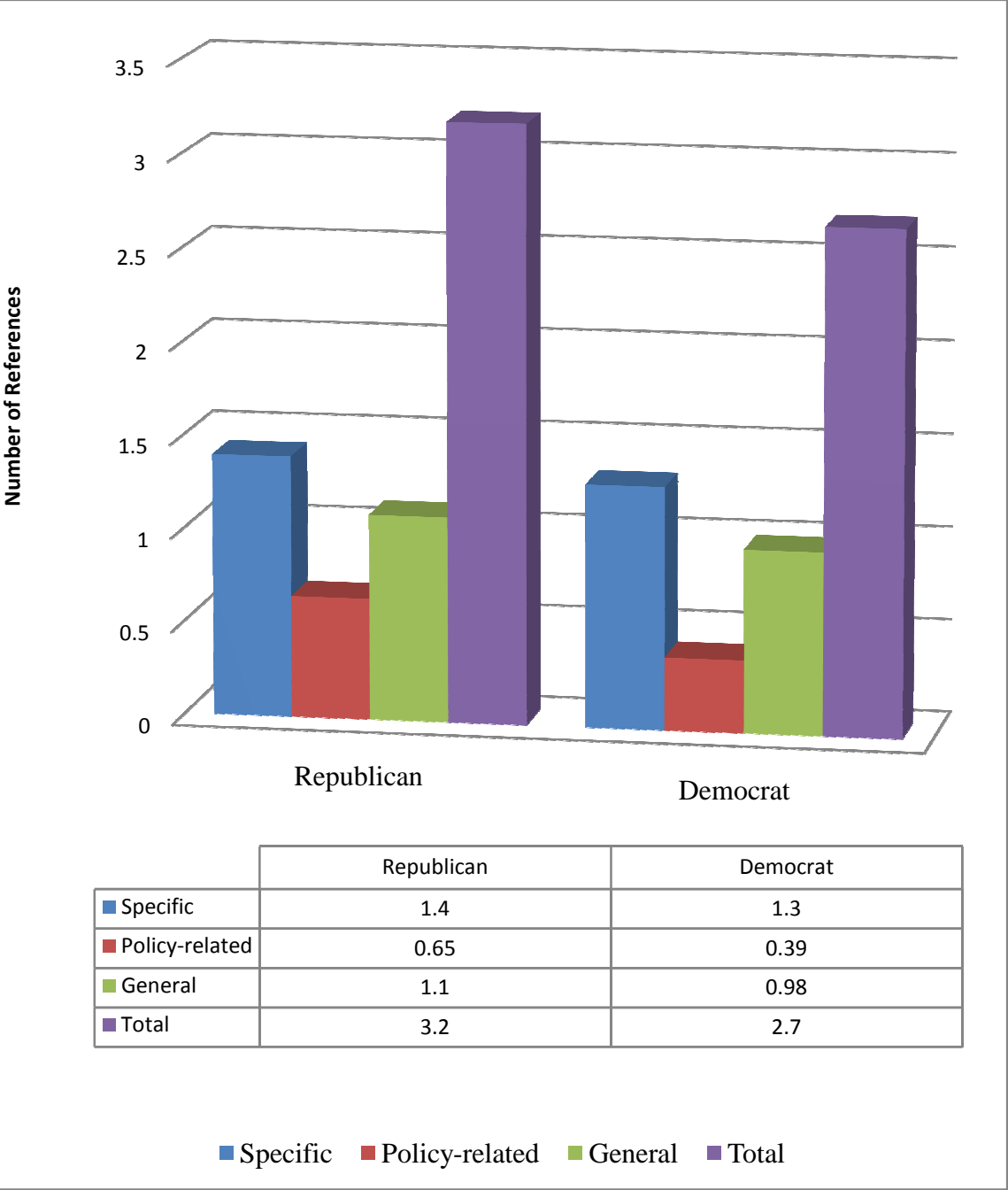
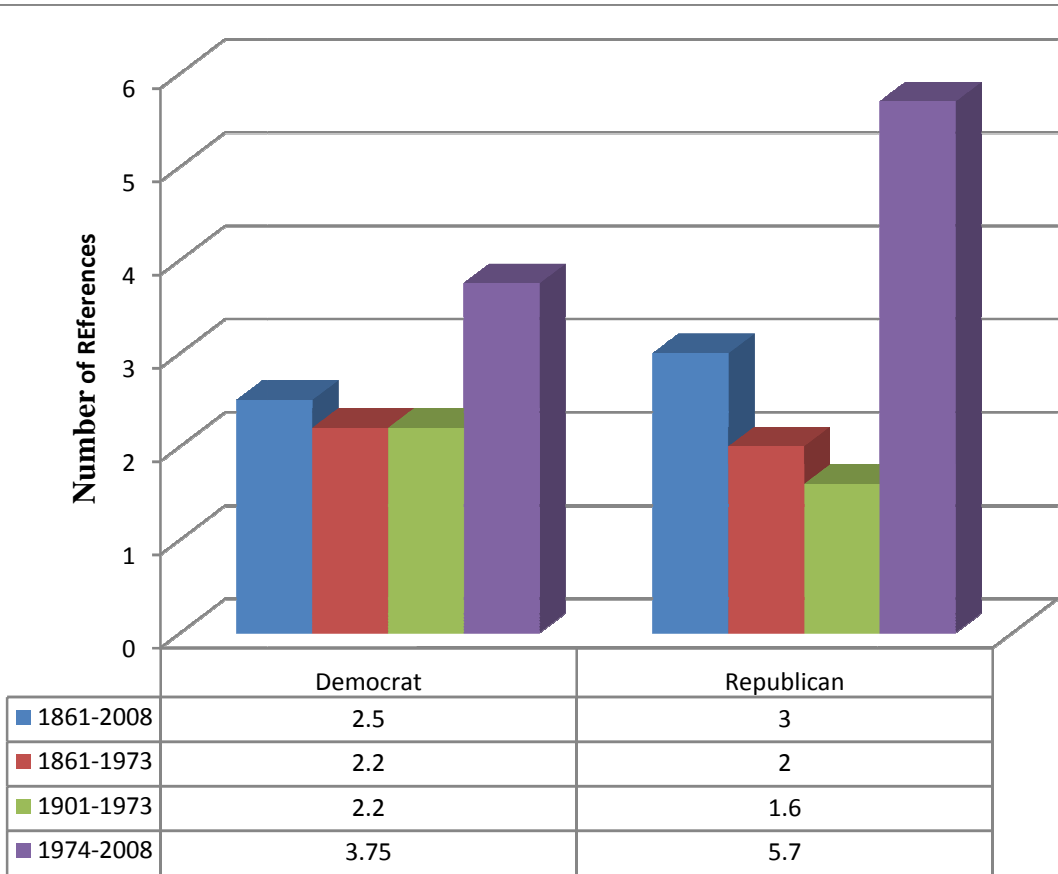
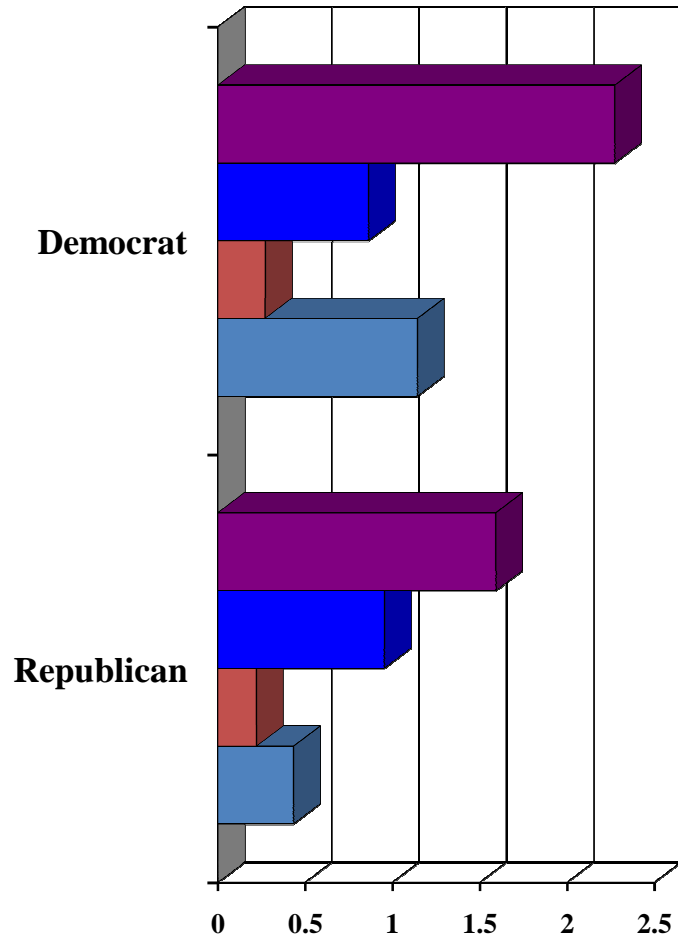


Chart XVIII
State of the Union—Average Use of Religious Rhetoric
Democrat vs. REpublican



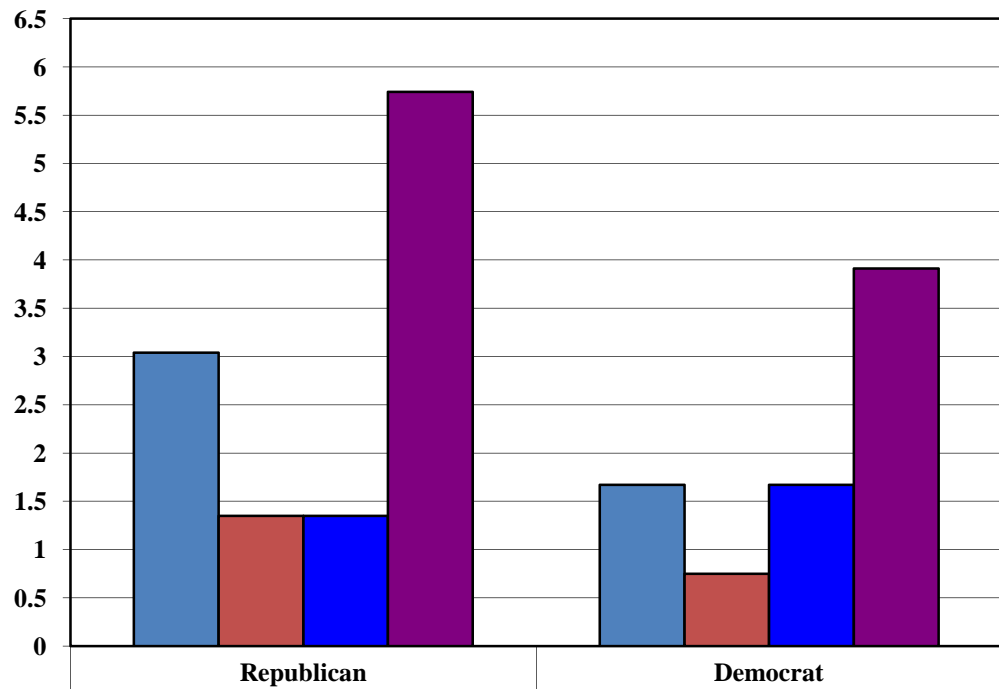
■ 1861-2008 ■ 1861-1973 ■ 1901-1973 ■ 1974-2008

Chart XIX
Use of Religious Rhetoric in the State of the Union
Average number of references: 1901-1973



	Republican	Democrat
■ Total	1.59	2.27
■ General	0.95	0.86
■ Policy-related	0.22	0.27
■ Specific	0.43	1.14

Chart XX
Use of Religious Rhetoric in the State of the Union
Average number of references: 1974-2008



■ Specific	3.04	1.67
■ Policy-related	1.35	0.75
■ General	1.35	1.67
■ Total	5.74	3.91

Chart XXI
Average Use of Religious Rhetoric in the State of the Union
First Term vs. Second Term

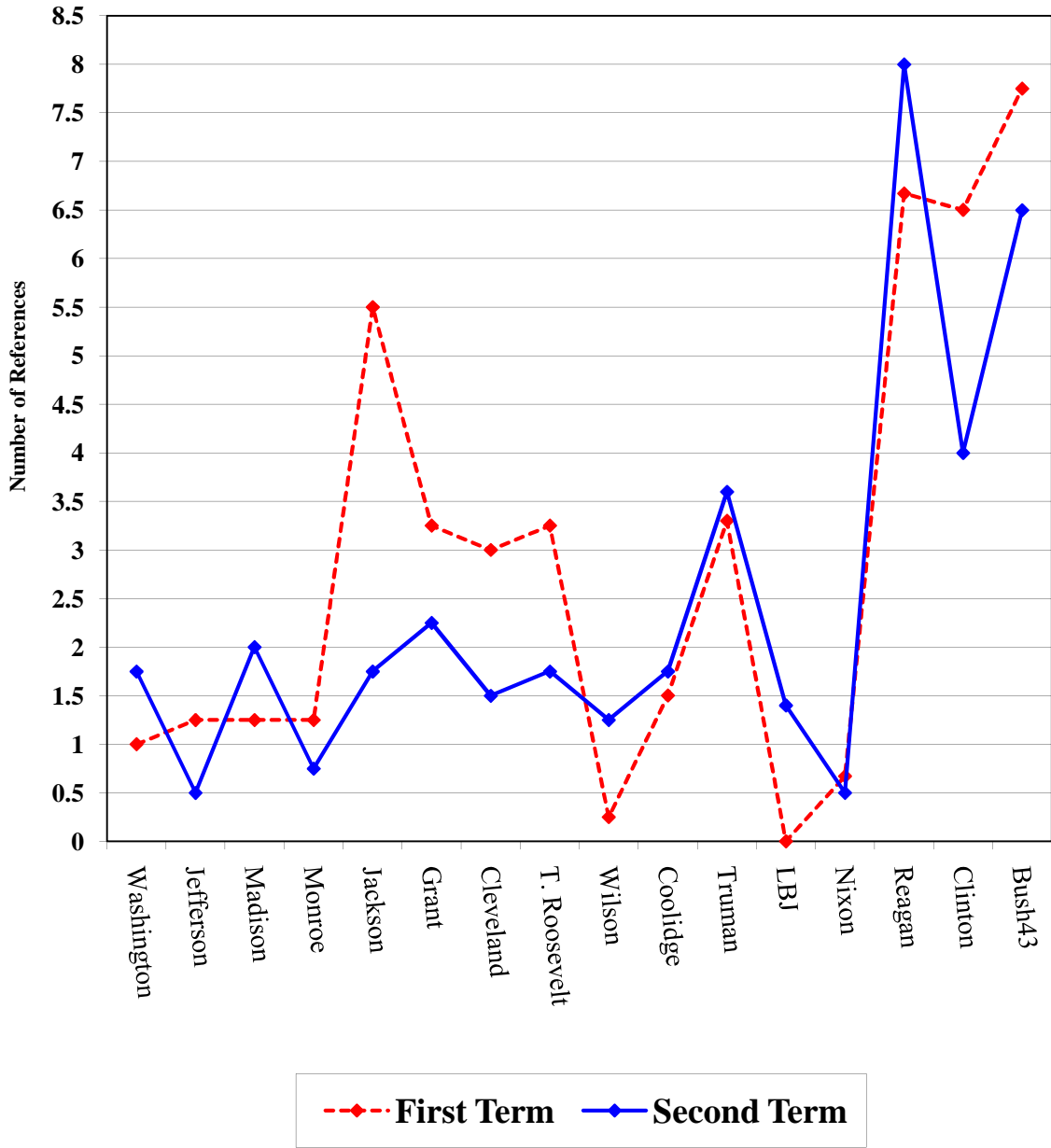
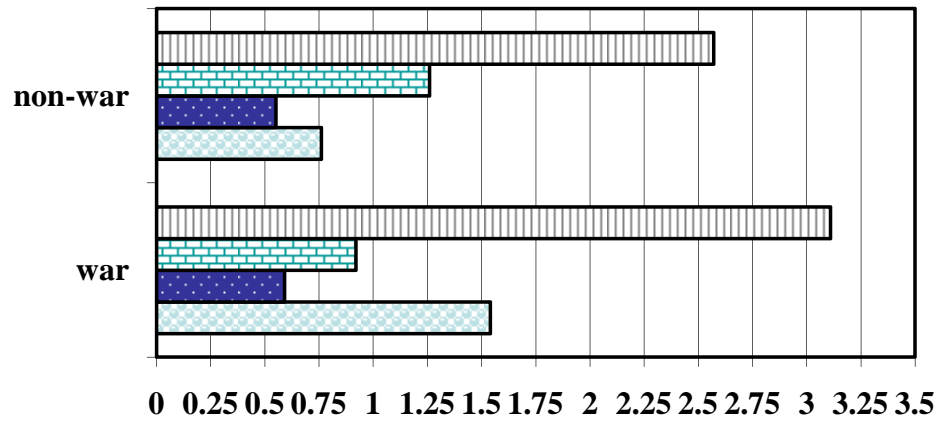


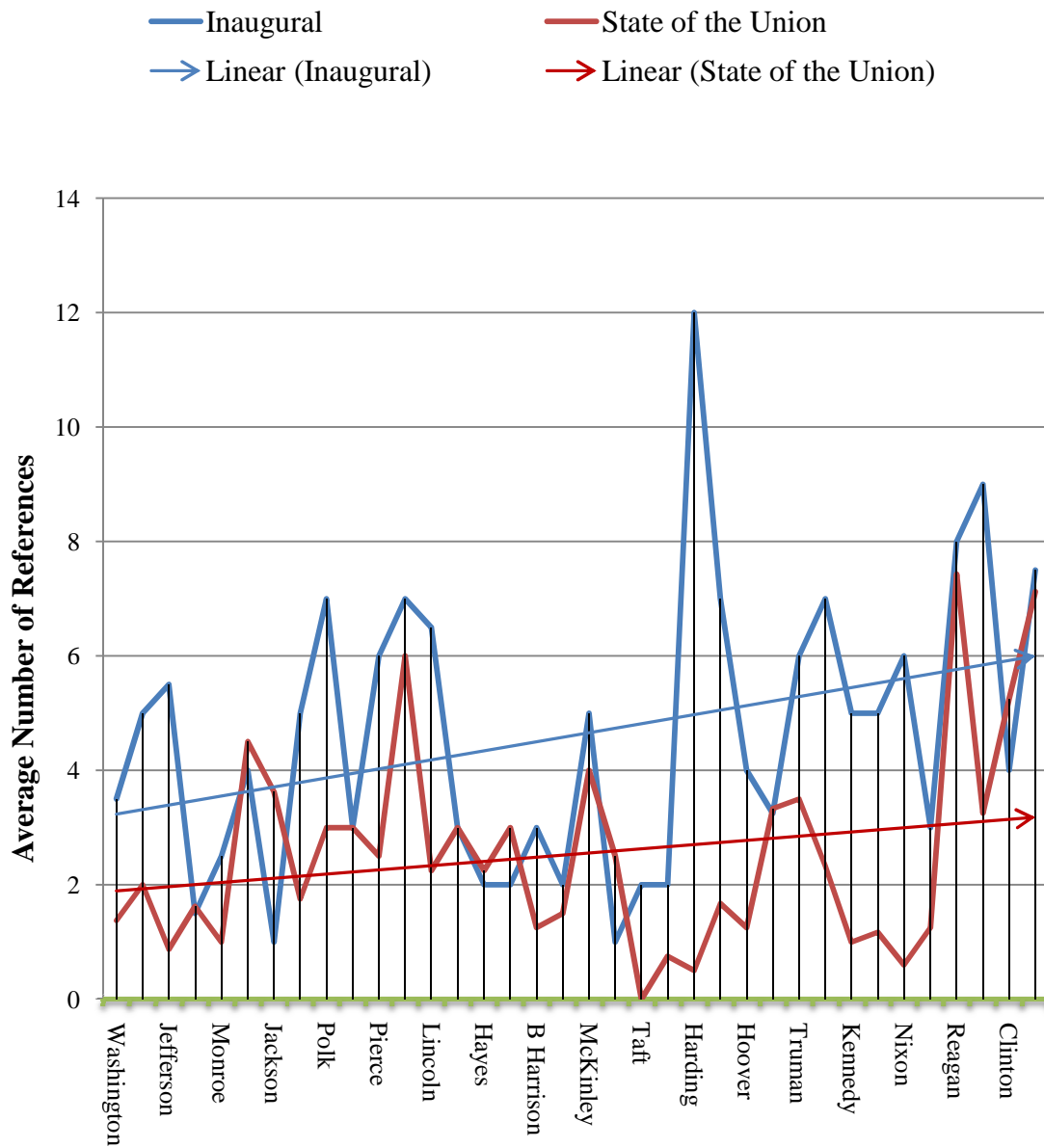
Chart XXII
State of the Union Messages
Average Use of Religious Rhetoric during War vs. Non-war



	war	non-war
□ Total	3.11	2.57
▒ General	0.92	1.26
■ Policy-related	0.59	0.55
▓ Specific	1.54	0.76

Number of References

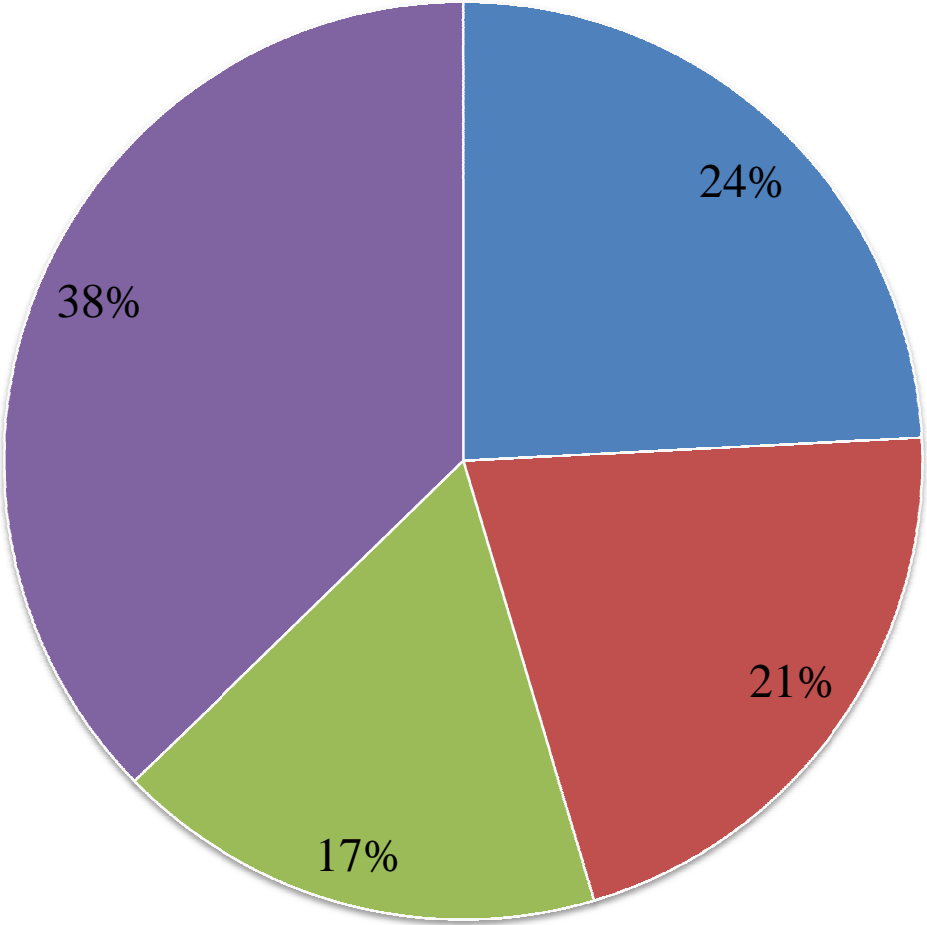
Chart XXIII
Total Use of Religious Rhetoric



Average Use of Religious Rhetoric by Presidents who delivered BOTH an Inaugural Address and at least one State of the Union Message

Chart XXIV. Religious Rhetoric Themes in the State of the Union

■ Past Blessings ■ Future Blessings ■ Religious Freedom ■ Other



Appendix E
Religious Rhetoric
Inaugural Addresses

President	Word length	Specific	Policy-related	General	Total
Washington – 1789	1428	0	0	7 ¹	7
Washington – 1793	135	0	0	0	0
Adams – 1797	2318	1 ²	0	4 ³	5
Jefferson – 1801	1721	0	0	6 ⁴	6
Jefferson – 1805	2158	1 ⁵	2 ⁶	2 ⁷	5
Madison – 1809	1175	0	1 ⁸	1 ⁹	2
Madison – 1813	1210	0	0	1 ¹⁰	1
Monroe – 1817	3370	0	0	3 ¹¹	3
Monroe – 1821	4461	1 ¹²	0	1 ¹³	2
JQ Adams – 1825	2912	1 ¹⁴	1 ¹⁵	2 ¹⁶	4
Jackson – 1829	1126	0	0	1 ¹⁷	1
Jackson – 1833	1173	0	0	1 ¹⁸	1
Van Buren – 1837	3833	0	0	5 ¹⁹	5
WH Harrison – 1841	8444	2 ²⁰	1 ²¹	6 ²²	9
Tyler	No inaugural				
Polk – 1845	4800	0	0	7 ²³	7
Taylor – 1849	1088	0	2 ²⁴	1 ²⁵	3
Fillmore	No inaugural				
Pierce – 1853	3334	1 ²⁶	0	5 ²⁷	6
Buchanan – 1857	2823	1 ²⁸	2 ²⁹	4 ³⁰	7
Lincoln – 1861	3634	1 ³¹	0	3 ³²	4
Lincoln – 1865	699	6 ³³	0	3 ³⁴	9
A Johnson	No inaugural				
Grant – 1869	1127	1 ³⁵	1 ³⁶	2 ³⁷	4

President	Word length	Specific	Policy-related	General	Total
Grant – 1873	1346	0	0	2 ³⁸	2
Hayes – 1877	2480	1 ³⁹	0	1 ⁴⁰	2
Garfield – 1881	2976	4 ⁴¹	5 ⁴²	0	9
Cleveland – 1885	1681	1 ⁴³	0	1 ⁴⁴	2
B Harrison – 1889	4393	2 ⁴⁵	0	1 ⁴⁶	3
Cleveland – 1893	2013	2 ⁴⁷	0	1 ⁴⁸	3
McKinley – 1897	3965	2 ⁴⁹	2 ⁵⁰	2 ⁵¹	6
McKinley – 1901	2216	3 ⁵²	1 ⁵³	0	4
T Roosevelt – 1905	983	0	0	1 ⁵⁴	1
Taft – 1909	5428	1 ⁵⁵	1 ⁵⁶	0	2
Wilson – 1913	1699	2 ⁵⁷	0	0	2
Wilson – 1917	1526	2 ⁵⁸	0	0	2
Harding – 1921	3325	7 ⁵⁹	2 ⁶⁰	1 ⁶¹	10
Coolidge – 1925	4055	1 ⁶²	2 ⁶³	4 ⁶⁴	7
Hoover – 1929	3788	2 ⁶⁵	1 ⁶⁶	1 ⁶⁷	4
FD Roosevelt – 1933	1880	6 ⁶⁸	0	0	6
FD Roosevelt – 1937	1808	0	0	1 ⁶⁹	1
FD Roosevelt – 1941	1358	0	0	1 ⁷⁰	1
FD Roosevelt – 1945	556	5 ⁷¹	0	0	5
Truman – 1949	2272	3 ⁷²	0	3 ⁷³	6
Eisenhower – 1953	2460	4 ⁷⁴	0	8 ⁷⁵	12
Eisenhower – 1957	1664	1 ⁷⁶	0	1 ⁷⁷	2
Kennedy – 1961	1364	5 ⁷⁸	0	0	5
Johnson – 1965	1488	5 ⁷⁹	0	0	5
Nixon – 1969	2124	7 ⁸⁰	0	1 ⁸¹	8
Nixon – 1973	1801	3 ⁸²	1 ⁸³	0	4

President	Word Length	Specific	Policy-Related	General	Total
Ford	No inaugural				
Carter – 1977	1228	2⁸⁴	0	1⁸⁵	3
Reagan – 1981	2423	4⁸⁶	0	2⁸⁷	6
Reagan – 1985	2562	8⁸⁸	0	2⁸⁹	10
Bush41 – 1989	2320	3⁹⁰	0	6⁹¹	9
Clinton – 1993	1598	3⁹²	0	1⁹³	4
Clinton – 1997	2156	1⁹⁴	0	3⁹⁵	4
Bush43 – 2001	1584	2⁹⁶	0	7⁹⁷	9
Bush43 – 2005	2073	3⁹⁸	0	3⁹⁹	6
Obama – 2009	2395	7¹⁰⁰	0	0	7

Appendix F

**Religious Rhetoric
State of the Union Messages**

#	NAME/ YEAR	LENGTH	SPECIFIC	POLICY- RELATED	GEN.	TOTAL
1	Washington: 1790	1089	0	0	1 ¹⁰¹	1
2	1790	1401	0	0	0	0
3	1791	2305	0	1 ¹⁰²	1 ¹⁰³	2
4	1792	2098	0	0	1 ¹⁰⁴	1
5	1793	1965	0	0	1 ¹⁰⁵	1
6	1794	2915	0	0	2 ¹⁰⁶	2
7	1795	1986	0	0	2 ¹⁰⁷	2
8	1796	2868	0	0	2 ¹⁰⁸	2
9	Adams: 1797	2063	0	0	3 ¹⁰⁹	3
10	1798	2218	0	1 ¹¹⁰	1 ¹¹¹	2
11	1799	1505	0	0	1 ¹¹²	1
12	1800	1372	0	0	2 ¹¹³	2
13	Jefferson: 1801	3224	0	0	1 ¹¹⁴	1
14	1802	2201	0	0	3 ¹¹⁵	3
15	1803	2274	0	0	1 ¹¹⁶	1
16	1804	2096	0	0	0	0
17	1805	2929	0	0	1 ¹¹⁷	1
18	1806	2860	0	0	0	0
19	1807	2384	0	0	0	0
20	1808	2675	0	0	1 ¹¹⁸	1
21	Madison: 1809	1831	0	0	1 ¹¹⁹	1
22	1810	2447	0	0	1 ¹²⁰	1
23	1811	2274	0	0	1 ¹²¹	1
24	1812	3244	0	2 ¹²²	0	2
25	1813	3258	0	0	3 ¹²³	3
26	1814	2112	0	0	1 ¹²⁴	1
27	1815	3156	0	1 ¹²⁵	1 ¹²⁶	2
28	1816	3369	0	0	2 ¹²⁷	2
29	Monroe: 1817	4430	0	0	1 ¹²⁸	1
30	1818	4379	0	0	2 ¹²⁹	2
31	1819	4712	0	0	0	0
32	1820	3452	0	0	2 ¹³⁰	2
33	1821	5823	0	0	1 ¹³¹	1
34	1822	4735	0	0	0	0
35	1823	6382	0	0	0	0
36	1824	8424	1 ¹³²	0	1 ¹³³	2
37	JQ Adams: 1825	9020	2 ¹³⁴	0	6 ¹³⁵	8
38	1826	7743	1 ¹³⁶	0	3 ¹³⁷	4
39	1827	6987	1 ¹³⁸	0	0	1
40	1828	7316	1 ¹³⁹	0	3 ¹⁴⁰	4
41	Jackson: 1829	10,534	2 ¹⁴¹	0	2 ¹⁴²	4
42	1830	15,083	3 ¹⁴³	0	3 ¹⁴⁴	6
43	1831	7187	1 ¹⁴⁵	0	8 ¹⁴⁶	9
44	1832	7871	1 ¹⁴⁷	0	2 ¹⁴⁸	3
45	1833	7900	0	0	2 ¹⁴⁹	2
46	1834	13,437	0	1 ¹⁵⁰	1 ¹⁵¹	2
47	1835	10,821	0	0	1 ¹⁵²	1

48	1836	12,358	0	0	2 ¹⁵³	2
49	Van Buren: 1837	11,452	0	0	1 ¹⁵⁴	1
50	1838	11,496	0	0	2 ¹⁵⁵	2
51	1839	13,439	0	1 ¹⁵⁶	2 ¹⁵⁷	3
52	1840	8993	0	0	1 ¹⁵⁸	1
	WH Harrison – none given					
53	Tyler: 1841	8245	0	0	2 ¹⁵⁹	2
54	1842	8419	0	2 ¹⁶⁰	3 ¹⁶¹	5
55	1843	8038	0	0	6 ¹⁶²	6
56	1844	9319	1 ¹⁶³	0	3 ¹⁶⁴	4
57	Polk: 1845	16,133	1 ¹⁶⁵	0	3 ¹⁶⁶	4
58	1846	18,242	0	0	1 ¹⁶⁷	1
59	1847	16,435	0	1 ¹⁶⁸	3 ¹⁶⁹	4
60	1848	21,334	1 ¹⁷⁰	0	2 ¹⁷¹	3
61	Taylor: 1849	7633	0	0	3 ¹⁷²	3
62	Fillmore: 1850	8335	0	0	4 ¹⁷³	4
63	1851	13,273	0	0	1 ¹⁷⁴	1
64	1852	9940	0	0	3 ¹⁷⁵	3
65	Pierce: 1853	9604	2 ¹⁷⁶	0	2 ¹⁷⁷	4
66	1854	10,150	4 ¹⁷⁸	0	0	4
67	1855	11,625	1 ¹⁷⁹	0	0	1
68	1856	10,501	0	0	1 ¹⁸⁰	1
69	Buchanan: 1857	13,673	1 ¹⁸¹	5 ¹⁸²	0	6
70	1858	16,375	0	1 ¹⁸³	1 ¹⁸⁴	2
71	1859	12,360	3 ¹⁸⁵	2 ¹⁸⁶	3 ¹⁸⁷	8
72	1860	14,051	5 ¹⁸⁸	1 ¹⁸⁹	2 ¹⁹⁰	8
73	Lincoln: 1861	6997	1 ¹⁹¹	0	1 ¹⁹²	2
74	1862	8395	2 ¹⁹³	0	1 ¹⁹⁴	3
75	1863	6128	1 ¹⁹⁵	1 ¹⁹⁶	0	2
76	1864	5982	1 ¹⁹⁷	1 ¹⁹⁸	0	2
77	A. Johnson 1865	9246	1 ¹⁹⁹	0	4 ²⁰⁰	5
78	1866	7148	0	0	1 ²⁰¹	1
79	1867	12,024	1 ²⁰²	0	0	1
80	1868	9867	0	0	1 ²⁰³	1
81	Grant 1869	7711	1 ²⁰⁴	0	1 ²⁰⁵	2
82	1870	8765	0	3 ²⁰⁶	1 ²⁰⁷	4
83	1871	6477	0	4 ²⁰⁸	1 ²⁰⁹	5
84	1872	10,133	1 ²¹⁰	0	1 ²¹¹	2
85	1873	10,055	1 ²¹²	0	0	1
86	1874	9846	0	0	0	0
87	1875	12,230	2 ²¹³	8 ²¹⁴	0	10
88	1876	6827	0	0	0	0
89	Hayes 1877	10,744	1 ²¹⁵	0	2 ²¹⁶	3
90	1878	7899	0	0	1 ²¹⁷	1
91	1879	11,663	0	0	1 ²¹⁸	1
92	1880	13,373	0	3 ²¹⁹	1 ²²⁰	4
	Garfield – none given					

93	Arthur	1881	13,350	0	1^{221}	2^{222}	3
94		1882	10,301	0	0	1^{223}	1
95		1883	8389	0	3^{224}	0	3
96		1884	8935	0	0	0	0
97	Cleveland [1]	1885	19,794	0	7^{225}	0	7
98		1886	15,171	0	0	1^{226}	1
99		1887	5305	0	0	0	0
100		1888	13,253	2^{227}	2^{228}	0	4
101	B. Harrison	1889	13,025	1^{229}	0	1^{230}	2
102		1890	11,549	0	1^{231}	1^{232}	2
103		1891	16,333	0	0	1^{233}	1
104		1892	13,725	0	0	0	0
105	Cleveland [2]	1893	12,322	0	0	0	0
106		1894	15,936	0	0	0	0
107		1895	14,683	0	2^{234}	0	2
108		1896	15,488	3^{235}	0	0	3
109	McKinley	1897	12,125	1^{236}	0	1^{237}	2
110		1898	20,271	0	0	1^{238}	1
111		1899	22,840	1^{239}	5^{240}	1^{241}	7
112		1900	19,160	1^{242}	5^{243}	0	6
113	T. Roosevelt	1901	19,616	3^{244}	1^{245}	3^{246}	7
114		1902	9788	0	0	0	0
115		1903	15,013	0	0	0	0
116		1904	17,429	1^{247}	2^{248}	3^{249}	6
117		1905	25,091	1^{250}	1^{251}	1^{252}	3
118		1906	23,621	1^{253}	0	2^{254}	3
119		1907	27,420	1^{255}	0	0	1
120		1908	19,431	0	0	0	0
121	Taft	1909	13,913	0	0	0	0
122		1910	27,704	0	0	0	0
123		1911	23,775	0	0	0	0
124		1912	25,181	0	0	0	0
125	Wilson	1913	3562	0	0	0	0
126		1914	4552	1^{256}	0	0	1
127		1915	7701	0	0	0	0
128		1916	2129	0	0	0	0
129		1917	3932	3^{257}	0	0	3
130		1918	5485	2^{258}	0	0	2
131		1919	4766	0	0	0	0
132		1920	2721	0	0	0	0
133	Harding	1921	5617	0	1^{259}	0	1
134		1922	5760	0	0	0	0
135	Coolidge	1923	6712	0	0	1^{260}	1
136		1924	6973	0	0	2^{261}	2
137		1925	10,853	0	0	3^{262}	3
138		1926	10,320	0	0	2^{263}	2
139		1927	8788	0	0	0	0
140		1928	8068	1^{264}	0	1^{265}	2
141	Hoover	1929	11,008	0	0	2^{266}	2

142		1930	4555	0	0	1 ²⁶⁷	1
143		1931	5701	0	0	1 ²⁶⁸	1
144		1932	4220	0	0	1 ²⁶⁹	1
145	FDR	1934	2243	0	1 ²⁷⁰	0	1
146		1935	3538	0	0	1 ²⁷¹	1
147		1936	3838	1 ²⁷²	0	2 ²⁷³	3
148		1937	2746	0	0	0	0
149		1938	4714	0	0	0	0
150		1939	3781	3 ²⁷⁴	0	11 ²⁷⁵	14
151		1940	3212	1 ²⁷⁶	0	1 ²⁷⁷	2
152		1941	3330	5 ²⁷⁸	0	1 ²⁷⁹	6
153		1942	3528	4 ²⁸⁰	0	3 ²⁸¹	7
154		1943	4602	1 ²⁸²	0	1 ²⁸³	2
155		1944	3825	1 ²⁸⁴	0	0	1
156		1945	8227	1 ²⁸⁵	0	1 ²⁸⁶	2
157	Truman	1946	17,256	1 ²⁸⁷	1 ²⁸⁸	0	2
158		1947	6062	0	1 ²⁸⁹	2 ²⁹⁰	3
159		1948	5132	1 ²⁹¹	2 ²⁹²	2 ²⁹³	5
160		1949	3437	2 ²⁹⁴	0	1 ²⁹⁵	3
161		1950	5164	3 ²⁹⁶	1 ²⁹⁷	2 ²⁹⁸	6
162		1951	4031	1 ²⁹⁹	1 ³⁰⁰	0	2
163		1952	5399	1 ³⁰¹	3 ³⁰²	0	4
164		1953	9713	2 ³⁰³	0	1 ³⁰⁴	3
165	Eisenhower	1953	7001	0	0	0	0
166		1954	6017	0	0	1 ³⁰⁵	1
167		1955	7287	2 ³⁰⁶	1 ³⁰⁷	1 ³⁰⁸	4
168		1956	8312	1 ³⁰⁹	2 ³¹⁰	2 ³¹¹	5
169		1957	4174	0	0	5 ³¹²	5
170		1958	4952	1 ³¹³	0	0	1
171		1959	4919	2 ³¹⁴	0	0	2
172		1960	5545	1 ³¹⁵	0	2 ³¹⁶	3
173		1961	6234	0	0	0	0
174	Kennedy	1961	5307	1 ³¹⁷	0	0	1
175		1962	6619	1 ³¹⁸	0	0	1
176		1963	5434	1 ³¹⁹	0	0	1
177	Johnson	1964	3241	0	0	0	0
178		1965	4476	2 ³²⁰	0	0	2
179		1966	5581	1 ³²¹	0	0	1
180		1967	7230	1 ³²²	0	1 ³²³	2
181		1968	4998	0	0	2 ³²⁴	2
182		1969	4163	0	0	0	0
183	Nixon	1970	4490	1 ³²⁵	0	0	1
184		1971	4552	0	0	1 ³²⁶	1
185		1972	4020	0	0	0	0
186		1973	1683	0	0	0	0
187		1974	5192	1 ³²⁷	0	0	1
188	Ford	1975	4145	0	0	0	0
189		1976	4992	2 ³²⁸	0	2 ³²⁹	4
190		1977	4741	3 ³³⁰	0	2 ³³¹	5

191	Carter	1978	4614	1 ³³²	0	0	1
192		1979	3305	0	0	0	0
193		1980	3490	1 ³³³	1 ³³⁴	1 ³³⁵	3
194		1981	33,903	1 ³³⁶	0	0	1
195	Reagan	1982	5200	3 ³³⁷	0	1 ³³⁸	4
196		1983	5588	2 ³³⁹	1 ³⁴⁰	2 ³⁴¹	5
197		1984	4979	9 ³⁴²	1 ³⁴³	1 ³⁴⁴	11
198		1985	4247	3 ³⁴⁵	3 ³⁴⁶	1 ³⁴⁷	7
199		1986	3496	3 ³⁴⁸	4 ³⁴⁹	1 ³⁵⁰	8
200		1987	3817	1 ³⁵¹	5 ³⁵²	2 ³⁵³	8
201		1988	4881	3 ³⁵⁴	2 ³⁵⁵	4 ³⁵⁶	9
202	Bush41	1989*	4817	2 ³⁵⁷	1 ³⁵⁸	1 ³⁵⁹	4
203		1990	3791	3 ³⁶⁰	0	1 ³⁶¹	4
204		1991	3985	1 ³⁶²	0	0	1
205		1992	5096	4 ³⁶³	0	0	4
206	Clinton	1993*	7019	1 ³⁶⁴	0	0	1
207		1994	7414	3 ³⁶⁵	0	2 ³⁶⁶	5
208		1995	9206	3 ³⁶⁷	1 ³⁶⁸	9 ³⁶⁹	13
209		1996	6355	2 ³⁷⁰	1 ³⁷¹	2 ³⁷²	5
210		1997	6774	4 ³⁷³	2 ³⁷⁴	1 ³⁷⁵	7
211		1998	7329	1 ³⁷⁶	1 ³⁷⁷	0	2
212		1999	7501	1 ³⁷⁸	0	0	1
213		2000	9106	2 ³⁷⁹	3 ³⁸⁰	1 ³⁸¹	6
214	Bush43	2001	4384	1 ³⁸²	1 ³⁸³	1 ³⁸⁴	3
215		2002	3850	5 ³⁸⁵	0	1 ³⁸⁶	6
216		2003	5395	5 ³⁸⁷	2 ³⁸⁸	1 ³⁸⁹	8
217		2004	5192	2 ³⁹⁰	7 ³⁹¹	4 ³⁹²	13
218		2005	5117	1 ³⁹³	0	1 ³⁹⁴	2
219		2006	5340	3 ³⁹⁵	1 ³⁹⁶	2 ³⁹⁷	6
220		2007	5573	10 ¹²⁵	0	3 ³⁹⁸	13
221		2008	5703	1 ³⁹⁹	2 ⁴⁰⁰	1 ⁴⁰¹	4
222	Obama	2009	6081	1 ⁴⁰²	0	0	1

¹²⁵ (a) Al Qaida and its followers are Sunni extremists possessed by hatred and commanded by a harsh and narrow ideology.

(b) These men are not given to idle words, and they are just one camp in the Islamist radical movement.

(c) In recent times, it has also become clear that we face an escalating danger from Shi'a extremists who are just as hostile to America and are also determined to dominate the Middle East.

(d) The Shi'a and Sunni extremists are different faces of the same totalitarian threat.

(e) In Iraq, Al Qaida and other Sunni extremists blew up one of the most sacred places in Shi'a Islam, the Golden Mosque of Samarra.

(f) This atrocity, directed at a Muslim house of prayer, was designed to provoke retaliation from Iraqi Shi'a, and it succeeded.

(g) Radical Shi'a elements, some of whom receive support from Iran, formed death squads.

(h) We could expect an epic battle between Shi'a extremists backed by Iran and Sunni extremists aided by Al Qaida and supporters of the old regime.

(i) A friend has said of this good-hearted man: "Mutombo believes that God has given him this opportunity to do great things." [Referring to Dikembe Mutombo seated in the gallery.]

(j) God bless.

¹ (a) ...my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe...that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States...

(b) ...this homage to the Great Author of every public and private good.

(c) No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than those of the United States.

(d) Every step...seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.

(e) ...without some return of pious gratitude, along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings...

(f) ...the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained;

(g) ...I shall take my present leave; but not without resorting once more to the benign Parent of the Human Race in humble supplication that, since He has been pleased to favor the American people with opportunities...so His divine blessing may be equally conspicuous in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations, and the wise measures on which the success of this Government must depend.

² ...if a veneration for the religion of a people who profess and call themselves Christians, and a fixed resolution to consider a decent respect for Christianity among the best recommendations for the public service, can enable me in any degree to comply with your wishes...

³ (a) Relying...on...an overruling Providence which had so signally protected this country from the first...

(b) ...contempt of public and private faith...

(c) ...every institution for propagating knowledge, virtue, and religion among all classes of the people...as the only means of preserving our Constitution from its natural enemies...foreign influence, which is the angel of destruction...

(d) And may that Being who is supreme over all, the Patron of Order, the Fountain of Justice, and the Protector in all ages of the world of virtuous liberty, continue His blessing upon this nation and its Government and give it all possible success and duration consistent with the ends of His providence.

⁴ (a) ...having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered...

(b) ...have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him?

(c) ...enlightened by a benign religion, professed, indeed, and practiced in various forms, yet all of them inculcating honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man; acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence, which by all its dispensations proves that it delights in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter.

(d) Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; ...

(e) ...freedom of religion; ...

(f) ...may that Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe lead our councils to what is best, and give them a favorable issue for your peace and prosperity.

⁵ I shall need, too, the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life; who has covered our infancy with His providence and our riper years with His wisdom and power, and to whose goodness I ask you to join in supplications with me that He will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures that whatsoever they do shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship, and approbation of all nations.

⁶ (a) In matters of religion I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the Constitution independent of the powers of the General Government.

(b) I have therefore undertaken on no occasion to prescribe the religious exercises suited to it, but have left them, as the Constitution found them, under the direction and discipline of the church or state authorities acknowledged by the several religious societies.

⁷ (a) ...their duty is to remain as their Creator made them...

(b) ...that peace be cultivated, civil and religious liberty unassailed...

⁸ ...to avoid the slightest interference with the right of conscience or the functions of religion, so wisely exempted from civil jurisdiction;

⁹ In these my confidence will under every difficulty be best placed, next to that which we have all been encouraged to feel in the guardianship and guidance of that Almighty Being whose power regulates the

destiny of nations, whose blessings have been so conspicuously dispensed to this rising Republic, and to whom we are bound to address our devout gratitude for the past, as well as our fervent supplications and best hopes for the future.

¹⁰ ...a conviction that the war with a powerful nation, which forms so prominent a feature in our situation, is stamped with that justice which invites the smiles of Heaven on the means of conducting it to a successful termination.

¹¹ (a) Who restrained from offering his vows in the mode which he prefers to the Divine Author of his being?

(b) ...we can not fail, under the favor of a gracious Providence, to attain the high destiny which seems to await us.

(c) I enter on the trust to which I have been called by the suffrages of my fellow-citizens with my fervent prayers to the Almighty that He will be graciously pleased to continue to us that protection which He has already so conspicuously displayed in our favor.

¹² ...with a firm reliance on the protection of Almighty God, I shall forthwith commence the duties of the high trust to which you have called me.

¹³ ...the liberty, prosperity, and happiness of our country will always be the object of my most fervent prayers to the Supreme Author of All Good.

¹⁴ ...knowing that "except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain," with fervent supplications for His favor, to His overruling providence I commit with humble but fearless confidence my own fate and the future destinies of my country. [quoting Psalms 127:1]

¹⁵ ...freedom of the press and of religious opinion should be inviolate...

¹⁶ (a) I appear, my fellow-citizens, in your presence and in that of Heaven to bind myself by the solemnities of religious obligation to the faithful performance of the duties allotted to me...

(b) We have suffered sometimes by the visitation of Heaven through disease...

¹⁷ ...a firm reliance on the goodness of that Power whose providence mercifully protected our national infancy, and has since upheld our liberties in various vicissitudes, encourages me to offer up my ardent supplications that He will continue to make our beloved country the object of His divine care and gracious benediction.

¹⁸ Finally, it is my most fervent prayer to that Almighty Being before whom I now stand, and who has kept us in His hands from the infancy of our Republic to the present day, that He will so overrule all my intentions and actions and inspire the hearts of my fellow-citizens that we may be preserved from dangers of all kinds and continue forever a united and happy people.

¹⁹ (a) ...I should not dare to enter upon my path of duty...did I not permit myself humbly to hope for the sustaining support of an ever-watchful and beneficent Providence.

(b) The privileges, civil and religious, of the humblest individual are still sacredly protected home ...

(c) ...looking forward to the far-distant future with ardent prayers and confiding hopes...

(d) ...only look to the gracious protection of the Divine Being whose strengthening support I humbly solicit, and whom I fervently pray to look down upon us all.

(e) May it be among the dispensations of His providence to bless our beloved country with honors and with length of days.

²⁰ (a) ...like the false Christs whose coming was foretold by the Savior...

(b) I deem the present occasion sufficiently important and solemn to justify me in expressing to my fellow-citizens a profound reverence for the Christian religion and a thorough conviction that sound morals, religious liberty, and a just sense of religious responsibility are essentially connected with all true and lasting happiness; and to that good Being who has blessed us by the gifts of civil and religious freedom, who watched over and prospered the labors of our fathers and has hitherto preserved to us institutions far exceeding in excellence those of any other people, let us unite in fervently commending every interest of our beloved country in all future time.

²¹ I can conceive of no more sublime spectacle, none more likely to propitiate an impartial and common Creator, than a rigid adherence to the principles of justice on the part of a powerful nation in its transactions with a weaker and uncivilized people...

²² (a) I too well understand the dangerous temptations...not to place my chief confidence upon the aid of that Almighty Power which has hitherto protected me and enabled me to bring to favorable issues other important but still greatly inferior trusts heretofore confided to me by my country.

(b) We admit of no government by divine right, believing that so far as power is concerned the Beneficent Creator has made no distinction amongst men...

(c) ...our sovereignty...can interfere with no one's faith, prescribe forms of worship for no one's observance.

(d) ...the American citizen...claims them [privileges] because he is himself a man, fashioned by the same Almighty hand as the rest of his species and entitled to a full share of the blessings with which He has endowed them.

(e) The maxim...that "the freedom of the press is the great bulwark of civil and religious liberty" is one of the most precious legacies...

(f) In the principles and forms of government and religion...neither has been interrupted...

²³ (a) In assuming responsibilities so vast I fervently invoke the aid of that Almighty Ruler of the Universe in whose hands are the destinies of nations and of men to guard this Heaven-favored land against the mischiefs which without His guidance might arise from an unwise public policy.

(b) With a firm reliance upon the wisdom of Omnipotence to sustain and direct me in the path of duty which I am appointed to pursue.

(c) It [the Government of the United States] is a common protector of...every religious sect, in their worship of the Almighty according to the dictates of their own conscience.

(d) This most admirable and wisest system of well-regulated self-government...will...endure for ages to come and dispense the blessings of civil and religious liberty to distant generations.

(e) No union exists between church and state, and perfect freedom of opinion is guaranteed to all sects and creeds.

(f) ...under no other system of government revealed by Heaven or devised by man has reason been allowed so free and broad a scope to combat error.

(g) ...again humbly supplicating that Divine Being who has watched over and protected our beloved country from its infancy to the present hour to continue His gracious benedictions upon us, that we may continue to be a prosperous and happy people.

²⁴ (a) ...the dictates of religion direct us to the cultivation of peaceful and friendly relations with all other powers.

(b) Let us invoke a continuance of the same protecting care which has led us from small beginnings to the eminence we this day occupy, and let us seek to deserved that continuance by prudence and moderation in our councils, by well-directed attempts to assuage the bitterness which too often marks unavoidable differences of opinion, by the promulgation and practice of just and liberal principles, and by an enlarged patriotism, which shall acknowledge no limits but those of our own widespread Republic.

²⁵ ...I congratulate you, my fellow-citizens, upon the high state of prosperity to which the goodness of Divine Providence has conducted our common country.

²⁶ It must be felt that there is no national security but in the nation's humble, acknowledged dependence upon God and His overruling providence.

²⁷ (a) The energy with which that great conflict was opened and, under the guidance of a manifest and beneficent Providence the uncomplaining endurance with which it was prosecuted to its consummation...

(b) What becomes of the noblest field ever opened for the advancement of our race in religion, in government, in the arts, and in all that dignifies and adorns mankind?

(c) It is with me an earnest and vital belief that as the Union has been the source, under Providence, of our prosperity to this time.

(d) ...beautiful as our fabric is, no earthly power or wisdom could ever reunite its broken fragments.

(e) I can express no better hope for my country than that the kind Providence which smiled upon our fathers may enable their children to preserve the blessings they have inherited.

²⁸ In entering upon this great office I must humbly invoke the God of our fathers for wisdom and firmness to execute its high and responsible duties...

²⁹ (a) We ought to cultivate peace, commerce, and friendship with all nations...in a spirit of Christian benevolence toward our fellow-men.

(b) Hitherto in all our acquisitions the people, under the protection of the American flag, have enjoyed civil and religious liberty.

³⁰ (a) ...let me earnestly ask their [American people] support in sustaining all just measures calculated to perpetuate these, the richest political blessings which Heaven has ever bestowed upon any nation.

(b) ...I feel an humble confidence that the kind Providence which inspired our fathers with wisdom to frame the most perfect form of government and union ever devised by man will not suffer it to perish until it shall have been peacefully instrumental by its example in the extension of civil and religious liberty throughout the world.

(c) ...those exiles from foreign shores who may seek in this country to improve their condition and to enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

(d) I shall now proceed to take the oath prescribed by the Constitution, whilst humbly invoking the blessing of Divine Providence on this great people.

³¹ Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

³² (a) If the Almighty Ruler of nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

(b) 'You' have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

(c) The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

³³ (a) Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other.

(b) It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged.

(c) "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." [quoting Matthew 18:7 without reference]

(d) If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?

(e) Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." [quoting Psalms 19:9 without reference]

(f) With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the fight as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

³⁴ (a) The prayers of both could not be answered.

(b) The Almighty has His own purposes.

(c) Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.

³⁵ In conclusion I ask patient forbearance one toward another throughout the land, and a determined effort on the part of every citizen to do his share toward cementing a happy union; and I ask the prayers of the nation to Almighty God in behalf of this consummation.

³⁶ This requires security of person, property, and free religious and political opinion in every part of our common country, without regard to local prejudice.

³⁷ (a) Why, it looks as though Providence had bestowed upon us a strong box in the precious metals locked up in the sterile mountains of the far West...

(b) All divisions—geographical, political, and religious—can join in this common sentiment [national pride].

³⁸ (a) Under Providence I have been called a second time to act as Executive over this great nation.

(b) Rather do I believe that our Great Maker is preparing the world, in His own good time, to become one nation, speaking one language, and when armies and navies will be no longer required.

³⁹ Looking for the guidance of that Divine Hand by which the destinies of nations and individuals are shaped, I call upon you...to unite with me in an earnest effort to secure to our country the blessings, not only of material prosperity, but of justice, peace, and union..."and that all things may be so ordered and settled upon the best and surest foundations that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety,

may be established among us for all generations.” [quoting the 1871 Episcopal Book of Common Prayer without reference]

⁴⁰ That it [emancipation] was a wise, just, and providential act, fraught with good for all concerned, is not generally conceded throughout the country.

⁴¹ (a) With unquestioning devotion to the Union, with a patience and gentleness not born of fear, they [the emancipated race] have “followed the light as God gave them to see the light.”

(b) Let our people find a new meaning in the divine oracle which declares that “a little child shall lead them,” for our own little children will soon control the destinies of the Republic. [quoting Isaiah 11:6 without reference]

(c) They [our children] will surely bless their fathers and their fathers’ God that the union was preserved, that slavery was overthrown, and that both races were made equal before the law.

(d) ...upon our efforts to promote the welfare of this great people and their Government I reverently invoke the support and blessings of Almighty God.

⁴² (a) The Constitution guarantees absolute religious freedom.

(b) Congress is prohibited from making any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

(c) The Mormon Church not only offends the moral sense of manhood by sanctioning polygamy, but prevents the administration of justice through ordinary instrumentalities of law.

(d) In my judgment it is the duty of Congress, while respecting to the uttermost the conscientious convictions and religious scruples of every citizen, to prohibit within its jurisdiction all criminal practices, especially of that class which destroy the family relations and endanger social order.

(e) Nor can any ecclesiastical organization be safely permitted to usurp in the smallest degree the functions and powers of the National Government.

⁴³ And let us not trust to human effort alone, but humbly acknowledging the power and goodness of Almighty God, who presides over the destiny of nations, and who has at all times been revealed in our country’s’ history, let us invoke His aid and His blessings upon our labors.

⁴⁴ ...the Constitution...launched by the founders...consecrated by their prayers and patriotic devotion...

⁴⁵ (a) Entering thus solemnly into covenant with each other, we may reverently invoke and confidently expect the favor and help of Almighty God—that He will give to me wisdom, strength and fidelity, and to our people a spirit of fraternity and a love of righteousness and peace.

(b) God has placed upon our head a diadem and has laid at our feet power and wealth beyond definition or calculation.

⁴⁶ The influence of religion has been multiplied and strengthened.

⁴⁷ (a) I am sure my gratitude can make no better return than the pledge I now give before God and these witnesses.

(b) It can not be doubted that our stupendous achievements as a people and our country’s robust strength have given rise to heedlessness of those laws governing our national health which we can no more evade than human life can escape the laws of God and nature.

⁴⁸ Above all, I know there is a Supreme Being who rules the affairs of men and whose goodness and mercy have always followed the American people, and I know He will not turn from us now if we humbly and reverently seek His powerful aid.

⁴⁹ (a) ...relying upon the support of my countrymen and invoking the guidance of Almighty God.

(b) Our faith teaches that there is no safer reliance than upon the God of our fathers, who has so singularly favored the American people in every national trial, and who will not forsake us so long as we obey His commandments and walk humbly in His footsteps.

⁵⁰ (a)...the free and unmolested right of religious liberty and worship...are dearer and more universally enjoyed to-day than ever before. These guaranties must be sacredly preserved and wisely strengthened.

(b) ...illiteracy must be banished from the land if we shall attain that high destiny as the foremost of the enlightened nations of the world which, under Providence, we ought to achieve.

⁵¹ (a) This is the obligation I have reverently taken before the Lord Most High.

(b) To keep it [oath of office] will be my single purpose, my constant prayer;

⁵² (a) ...reverently invoking for my guidance the direction and favor of Almighty God.

(b) “Hope maketh not ashamed.” [quoting Romans 5:5 without reference]

(c) ...the nation [will] demonstrate its fitness to administer any new estate...and in the fear of God will “take the occasion by the hand and make the bounds of freedom wider yet.”

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- ⁵³ ...and it is my fervent prayer that if differences arise between us and other powers they may be settled by peaceful arbitration and that hereafter we may be spared the horrors of war.
- ⁵⁴ No people on earth have more cause to be thankful than ours, and this is said reverently, in no spirit of boastfulness in our own strength, but with gratitude to the Giver of Good who has blessed us with the conditions which have enabled us to achieve so large a measure of well-being and of happiness.
- ⁵⁵ ...I invoke the considerate sympathy and support of my fellow-citizens and the aid of the Almighty God in the discharge of my responsible duties.
- ⁵⁶ We should make every effort to prevent humiliating and degrading prohibition against any of our citizens wishing temporarily to sojourn in foreign countries because of race or religion.
- ⁵⁷ (a) The feelings with which we face this new age of right and opportunity sweep across our heartstrings like some air out of God's own presence, where justice and mercy are reconciled and the judge and the brother are one.
- (b) God helping me, I will not fail them, if they will but counsel and sustain me.
- ⁵⁸ (a) In their ardent heat we shall, in God's Providence, let us hope, be purged of faction and division, purified of the errant humors of party and of private interest and shall stand forth in the days to come with a new dignity of national pride and spirit.
- (b) I pray God I may be given the wisdom and the prudence to do my duty in the true spirit of this great people.
- ⁵⁹ (a) Surely there must have been God's intent in the making of this new-world Republic.
- (b) I would rejoice to acclaim the era of the Golden Rule and crown it with the autocracy of service [noting the Golden Rule without reference to Matthew 7:12].
- (c) But with the realization comes the surge of high resolve, and there is reassurance in belief in the God-given destiny of our Republic.
- (d) But here are a hundred millions, with common concern and shared responsibility, answerable to God and country.
- (e) I accept my part with single-mindedness of purpose and humility of spirit, and implore the favor and guidance of God in His Heaven.
- (f) I have taken the solemn oath of office on that passage of Holy Writ wherein it is asked: "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" [Quoting without reference Micah 6:8].
- (g) This I plight to God and country.
- ⁶⁰ (a) America is ready to encourage, eager to initiate, anxious to participate in any seemly program likely to lessen the probability of war, and promote that brotherhood of mankind which must be God's highest conception of human relationship.
- (b) My most reverent prayer for America is for industrial peace, with its rewards, widely and generally distributed, amid the inspiration of equal opportunity.
- ⁶¹ We have seen civil, human, and religious liberty verified and glorified.
- ⁶² She [America] cherishes no purpose save to merit the favor of Almighty God.
- ⁶³ (a) We can not permit any inquisition either within or without the law or apply any religious test to the holding of office.
- (b) Here it [America] will continue to stand, seeking peace and prosperity, solicitous for the welfare of the wage earner, promoting enterprise, developing waterways and natural resources, attentive to the intuitive counsel of womanhood, encouraging education, desiring the advancement of religion, supporting the cause of justice and honor among the nations.
- ⁶⁴ (a) But if we wish to continue to be distinctively American, we must continue to make that term comprehensive enough to embrace the legitimate desires of a civilized and enlightened people determined in all their relations to pursue a conscientious and religious life.
- (b) Peace will come when there is realization that only under a reign of law, based on righteousness and supported by the religious conviction of the brotherhood of man, can there be any hope of a complete and satisfying life. Parchment will fail, the sword will fail, it is only the spiritual nature of many that can be triumphant.
- (c) The legions which she [America] sends forth are armed, not with the sword, but with the cross.
- (d) The higher state to which she [America] seeks the allegiance of all mankind is not of human, but of divine origin.
- ⁶⁵ (a) It is a dedication and consecration under God to the highest office in service of our people.

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- (b) I ask the help of Almighty God in this service to my country to which you have called me.
- ⁶⁶ We do know what the attainments of these ideals [and aspirations of America] should be: . . . the growth of religious spirit and the tolerance of all faiths . . .
- ⁶⁷ I assume this trust in the humility of knowledge that only through the guidance of Almighty Providence can I hope to discharge its ever-increasing burdens.
- ⁶⁸ (a) They [our common difficulties] concern, thank God, only material things.
- (b) We are stricken by no plague of locusts. [Alluding, without reference, to the plague of locusts found in Exodus 10:1-19].
- (c) The money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization. [Alluding, without reference to Jesus driving out the money changers from the temple-Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15; and John 2:14-15].
- (d) In this dedication of a Nation we humbly ask the blessing of God.
- (e) May He protect each and every one of us.
- (f) May He guide me in the days to come.
- ⁶⁹ While this duty rests upon me I shall do my utmost to speak their [the American people] purpose and to do their will, seeking Divine guidance to help us each and every one to give light to them that sit in darkness and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
- ⁷⁰ As Americans, we go forward, in the service of our country, by the will of God.
- ⁷¹ (a) As I stand here today, having taken the solemn oath of office in the presence of my fellow countrymen—in the presence of our God—I know that it is America's purpose that we shall not fail.
- (b) The Almighty God has blessed our land in many ways.
- (c) He [The Almighty God] has given our people stout hearts and strong arms with which to strike mighty blows for freedom and truth.
- (d) He [The Almighty God] has given to our country a faith which has become the hope of all peoples in an anguished world.
- (e) So we pray to Him [The Almighty God] now for the vision to see our way clearly—to see the way that leads to a better life for ourselves and for all our fellow men—and to the achievement of His will to peace on earth.
- ⁷² (a) We believe that all men are created equal because they were created in the image of God.
- (b) People everywhere are coming to realize that what is involved is material well-being, human dignity, and the right to believe in and worship God.
- (c) With God's help, the future of mankind will be assured in a world of justice, harmony, and peace.
- ⁷³ (a) In performing the duties of my office, I need the help and the prayers of every one of you.
- (b) We are aided by all who desire freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom to live their own lives for useful ends.
- (c) Steadfast in our faith in the Almighty, we will advance toward a world where man's freedom is secure.
- ⁷⁴ (a) Almighty God, as we stand here at this moment my future associates in the Executive branch of Government join me in beseeching that Thou will make full and complete our dedication to the service of the people in this throng, and their fellow citizens everywhere.
- (b) We are summoned by this honored and historic ceremony to witness more than the act of one citizen swearing his oath of service, in the presence of God.
- (c) In our quest of understanding, we beseech God's guidance.
- (d) This is the work that awaits us all, to be done with bravery, with charity, and with prayer to Almighty God.
- ⁷⁵ (a) My Friends, before I begin the expression of those thoughts that I deem appropriate to this moment, would you permit me the privilege of uttering a little private prayer of my own.
- (b) Give us, we pray, the power to discern clearly right from wrong, and allow all our words and actions to be governed thereby, and by the laws of this land.
- (c) Especially we pray that our concern shall be for all the people regardless of station, race or calling.
- (d) May cooperation be permitted and be the mutual aim of those who, under the concepts of our Constitution, hold to differing political faiths; so that all may work for the good of our beloved country and Thy glory.
- (e) It [faith] establishes, beyond debate, those gifts of the Creator that are man's inalienable rights, and that make all men equal in His sight.

(f) Rather this change expresses a purpose of strengthening our dedication and devotion to the precepts of our founding documents, a conscious renewal of faith in our country and in the watchfulness of a Divine Providence.

(g) The enemies of this faith know no god but force, no devotion but its use.

(h) No principle or treasure that we hold, from the spiritual knowledge of our free schools and churches to the creative magic of free labor and capital, nothing lies safely beyond the reach of this struggle.

⁷⁶ Before all else, we seek, upon our common labor as a nation, the blessings of Almighty God.

⁷⁷ And the hopes in our hearts fashion the deepest prayers of our whole people.

⁷⁸ (a) For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago.

(b) And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

(c) Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah—to undo the heavy burdens . . . (and) let the oppressed go free.” [Reference to Isaiah 58:6].

(d) Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need—not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation”—a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself. [Quoting without reference a passage from Romans 12:12].

(e) With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.

⁷⁹ (a) On this occasion the oath I have taken before you and before God is not mine alone, but ours together.

(b) But we have no promise from God that our greatness will endure.

(c) We have been allowed by Him [God] to seek greatness with the sweat of our hands and the strength of our spirit.

(d) If we fail now then we will have forgotten in abundance what we learned in hardship: that democracy rests on faith, that freedom asks more than it gives, and the judgment of God is harshest on those who are most favored.

(e) For myself, I ask only in the words of an ancient leader: “Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?” [Quoting without reference Solomon’s prayer for wisdom found in 2 Chronicles 1:10].

⁸⁰ (a) He [FDR] could say in surveying the nation’s troubles: “They concern, thank God, only material things.” [Quoting from FDR’s first inaugural address in 1933].

(b) What remains is to give life to what is in the law: to insure at last that as all are born equal in dignity before God, all are born equal in dignity before man.

(c) I have taken an oath today in the presence of God and my countrymen to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States.

(d) The peace we seek, the peace we seek to win—is not victory over any other people, but the peace that comes “with healing in its wings;” with compassion for those who have suffered; with understanding for those who have opposed us; with the opportunity for all the peoples of this earth to choose their own destiny. [Quoting without reference Malachi 4:2 - *But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings*].

(e) Only a few short weeks ago we shared the glory of man’s first sight of the world as God sees it, as a single sphere reflecting light in the darkness.

(f) As the Apollo astronauts flew over the moon’s gray surface on Christmas Eve, they spoke to us of the beauty of earth—and in that voice so clear across the lunar distance, we heard them invoke God’s blessing on its goodness.

(g) So let us seize it [our destiny] not in fear, but in gladness—and “riders on the earth together,” let us go forward, firm in our faith, steadfast in our purpose, cautious of the dangers, but sustained by our confidence in the will of God and the promise of man.

⁸¹ When we listen to “the better angels of our nature,” we find that they celebrate the simple things, the basic things—such as goodness, decency, love, kindness. [Quoting without reference from Lincoln’s first inaugural in 1861: “The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”]

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- ⁸² (a) We shall answer to God, to history, and to our conscience for the way in which we use these years.
(b) Today, I ask your prayers that in the years ahead I may have God's help in making decisions that are right for America, and I pray for your help so that together we may be worthy of our challenge.
(c) Let us go forward from here confident in hope, strong in our faith in one another, sustained by our faith in God who created us, and striving always to serve His purpose.
- ⁸³ We have the chance today to do more than ever before in our history to make life better in America—to ensure better education, better health, better housing, better transportation, a cleaner environment—to restore respect for law, to make our communities more livable—and to ensure the God-given right of every American to full and equal opportunity.
- ⁸⁴ (a) Here before me is the Bible used in the inauguration of our first President in 1789, and I have just taken the oath of office on the Bible my mother gave me just a few years ago, opened to a timeless admonition from the ancient prophet Micah: “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” [Quoting from Micah 6:8].
(b) And I join in the hope that when my time as your President has ended, people might say this about our Nation:
--that we had remembered the words of Micah and renewed our search for humility, mercy, and justice;
--that we had torn down the barriers that separated those of difference race and region and religion, and where there had been mistrust, built unity, with a respect for diversity;
- ⁸⁵ Let us learn together and laugh together and work together and pray together, confident that in the end we will triumph together in the right.
- ⁸⁶ (a) Your dreams, your hopes, your goals are going to be the dreams, the hopes and the goals of this administration, so help me God.
(b) We are a nation under God, and I believe God intended for us to be free.
(c) It [the crisis we are facing today] does require, however, our best effort and our willingness to believe in ourselves and to believe in our capacity to perform great deeds, to believe that together with God's help we can and will resolve the problems which confront us.
(d) God bless you, and thank you.
- ⁸⁷ (a) I'm told that tens of thousands of prayer meetings are being held on this day, and for that I'm deeply grateful.
(b) It would be fitting and good, I think, if on each Inaugural Day in future years it should be declared a day of prayer.
- ⁸⁸ (a) Senator John Stennis, God bless you and welcome back.
(b) When the first President, George Washington, placed his hand upon the Bible, he stood less than a single day's journey by horseback from raw, untamed wilderness.
(c) Well, with heart and hand let us stand as one today—one people under God, determined that our future shall be worthy of our past.
(d) My friends, together we can do this, and do it we must, so help me God.
(e) There's no story more heartening in our history than the progress that we've made toward the brotherhood of man that God intended for us.
(f) We raise our voices to the God who is the Author of this most tender music.
(g) And may He continue to hold us close as we fill the world with our sound—in unity, affection, and love—one people under God, dedicated to the dream of freedom that He has placed in the human heart, called upon now to pass that dream on to a waiting and hopeful world.
(h) God bless you, and God bless America.
- ⁸⁹ (a) And I wonder if we could all join in a moment of silent prayer [for recently deceased Re. Gillis Long]. Amen.
(b) Today, we utter no prayer more fervently than the ancient prayer for peace on Earth.
- ⁹⁰ (a) I've just repeated word for word the oath taken by George Washington 200 years ago, and the Bible on which I placed my hand is the Bible on which he placed his.
(b) And if our flaws are endless, God's love is truly boundless.
(c) God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.
- ⁹¹ (a) And my first act as President is a prayer. I ask you to bow your heads.
(b) Heavenly Father, we bow our heads and thank You for Your love.

(c) Make us strong to do Your work, willing to heed and hear Your will, and write on our hearts these words: "Use power to help people."

(d) Help us remember, Lord. Amen.

(e) I take as my guide the hope of a saint: In crucial things, unity; in important things, diversity; in all things, generosity. [NOTE: He did not identify the saint he was quoting, and aides later could not.

However, he appeared to be paraphrasing the motto of Richard Baxter, a 17th century Puritan dissident from the Anglican Church, which was, "In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity"--<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/inaug/history/stories/bush89.htm>, accessed March 14, 2007].

(f) A President is neither prince nor pope, and I don't seek a window on men's souls.

⁹² (a) The Scripture says, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." [Quoting without reference Galatians 6:9].

(b) And now, each in our own way and with God's help, we must answer the call.

(c) Thank you and God bless you all.

⁹³ When our Founding Fathers boldly declared America's independence to the world and our purposes to the Almighty, they knew that America, to endure, would have to change: not change for change's sake but change to preserve America's ideals: life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness.

⁹⁴ Let us remember the timeless wisdom of Cardinal Bernardin, when facing the end of his own life. He said, "It is wrong to waste the precious gift of time on acrimony and division." [Joseph Bernardin was a Catholic Cardinal. On

September 9, 1996 President Clinton awarded Cardinal Bernardin the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In presenting the Medal, the President cited Cardinal Bernardin's work on behalf of racial equality and arms control and noted he "has been a persistent voice for moderation."]

⁹⁵ (a) Prejudice and contempt cloaked in the pretense of religious or political conviction are no different.

(b) Our rich texture of racial, religious, and political diversity will be a godsend in the 21st century.

(c) May God strengthen our hands for the good work ahead, and always, always bless our America.

⁹⁶ (a) Abandonment and abuse are not acts of God, they are failures of love.

(b) When we see that wounded traveler on the road to Jericho, we will not pass to the other side. [Alluding, without specific reference, to the story of the good Samaritan, Luke 10:30-37].

⁹⁷ (a) I know this is in our reach because we are guided by a power larger than ourselves who creates us equal in His image.

(b) And some needs and hurts are so deep they will only respond to a mentor's touch or a pastor's prayer.

(c) Church and charity, synagogue and mosque lend our communities their humanity, and they will have an honored place in our plans and in our laws.

(d) But as a saint of our times has said, every day we are called to do small things with great love. [Quoting without reference Mother Theresa].

(e) Do you not think an angel rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm?

(f) And an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm.

(g) God bless you all, and God bless America.

⁹⁸ (a) The rulers of outlaw regimes can know that we still believe as Abraham Lincoln did: "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it." [Quoting from Lincoln's speech before the first Republican state convention of Illinois on May 29, 1856].

(b) That edifice of character is built in families supported by communities with standards, and sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people.

(c) We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom, not because history runs on the wheels of inevitability-it is human choices that move events; not because we consider ourselves a chosen nation-God moves and chooses as He wills.

⁹⁹ (a) From the day of our founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this Earth has rights and dignity and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of heaven and Earth.

(b) History has an ebb and flow of justice, but history also has a visible direction, set by liberty and the Author of Liberty.

(c) May God bless you, and may He watch over the United States of America.

¹⁰⁰ (a) We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. [Alluding without reference to I Corinthians 13:11, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things (KJV)].
(b) The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit, to choose our better history, to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.
(c) We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus and nonbelievers.
(d) To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward based on mutual interest and mutual respect.
(e) This is the source of our confidence—the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny.
(f) And with eyes fixed on the horizon and God’s grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.
(g) God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

¹⁰¹ Still further to realize their expectations and to secure the blessings which a gracious Providence has placed within our reach will in the course of the present important session call for the cool and deliberate exertion of your patriotism, firmness and wisdom.

¹⁰² A system corresponding with the mild principles of religion and philanthropy toward an unenlightened race of men, whose happiness materially depends on the conduct of the United States, would be as honorable to the national character as conformable to the dictates of sound policy.

¹⁰³ Numerous as are the providential blessings which demand our grateful acknowledgments, the abundance with which another year has again rewarded the industry of the husbandmen is too important to escape recollection.

¹⁰⁴ The results of your common deliberations hitherto will, I trust, be productive of solid and durable advantages to our constituents, such as, by conciliating more and more their ultimate suffrage, will tend to strengthen and confirm their attachment to that Constitution of Government upon which, under Divine Providence, materially depend their union, their safety, and their happiness.

¹⁰⁵ But influenced by the belief that my conduct would be estimated according to its real motives, and that the people, and the authorities derived from them, would support exertions having nothing personal for their object, I have obeyed the suffrage which commanded me to resume the Executive power; and I humbly implore that Being on whose will the fate of nations depends to crown with success our mutual endeavors for the general happiness.

¹⁰⁶ (a) When we call to mind the gracious indulgences of Heaven by which the American people became a nation; when we survey the general prosperity of our country, and look forward to the riches, power, and happiness to which it seems destined, with the deepest regret do I announce to you that during your recess some of the citizens of the United States have been found capable of insurrection.

(b) Let us unite, therefore, in imploring the Supreme Ruler of Nations to spread his holy protection over these United States; to turn the machinations of the wicked to the confirming of our Constitution; to enable us at all times to root out internal sedition and put invasion to flight; to perpetuate to our country that prosperity which his goodness has already conferred, and to verify the anticipations of this Government being a safeguard of human rights.

¹⁰⁷ (a) I trust I do not deceive myself when I indulge the persuasion that I have never met you at any period when more than at the present the situation of our public affairs has afforded just cause for mutual congratulation, and for inviting you to join with me in profound gratitude to the Author of all Good for the numerous and extraordinary blessings we enjoy.

(b) Placed in a situation every way so auspicious, motives of commanding force impel us, with sincere acknowledgment to Heaven and pure love to our country, to unite our efforts to preserve, prolong, and improve our immense advantages.

¹⁰⁸ (a) In recurring to the internal situation of our country since I had last the pleasure to address you, I find ample reason for a renewed expression of that gratitude to the Ruler of the Universe which a continued series of prosperity has so often and so justly called forth.

(b) The situation in which I now stand for the last time, in the midst of the representatives of the people of the United States, naturally recalls the period when the administration of the present form of government commenced, and I can not omit the occasion to congratulate you and my country on the success of the experiment, nor to repeat my fervent supplications to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe and Sovereign Arbiter of Nations that His providential care may still be extended to the United States, that the virtue and

happiness of the people may be preserved, and that the Government which they have instituted for the protection of their liberties may be perpetual.

¹⁰⁹ (a) . . . we have, nevertheless, abundant cause of gratitude to the source of benevolence and influence for interior tranquility and personal security, for propitious seasons, prosperous agriculture, productive fisheries, and general improvements, and, above all, for a rational spirit of civil and religious liberty and a calm but steady determination to support our sovereignty, as well as our moral and our religious principles, against all open and secret attacks.

(b) Nothing, in the mean time, will contribute so much to the preservation of peace and the attainment of justice as manifestation of that energy and unanimity of which on many former occasions the people of the United States have given such memorable proofs, and the exertion of those resources for national defense which a beneficent Providence has kindly placed within their power.

(c) The state of society has so long been disturbed, the sense of moral and religious obligations so much weakened, public faith and national honor have been so impaired, respect to treaties has been so diminished, and the law of nations has lost so much of its force, while pride, ambition, avarice and violence have been so long unrestrained, there remains no reasonable ground on which to raise an expectation that a commerce without protection or defense will not be plundered.

¹¹⁰ While with reverence and resignation we contemplate the dispensations of Divine Providence in the alarming and destructive pestilence with which several of our cities and towns have been visited, there is cause for gratitude and mutual congratulations that the malady has disappeared and that we are again permitted to assemble in safety at the seat of Government for the discharge of our important duties. [Adams goes on to “invite” the Legislature to “examine the expediency of establishing suitable regulations in aid of the health laws of the respective States;”]

¹¹¹ While we think on this calamity and sympathize with the immediate sufferers, we have abundant reason to present to the Supreme Being our annual oblations of gratitude for a liberal participation in the ordinary blessings of His providence.

¹¹² The flattering prospects of abundance from the labors of the people by land and by sea; the prosperity of our extended commerce, notwithstanding interruptions occasioned by the belligerent state of a great part of the world; the return of health, industry, and trade to those cities which have lately been afflicted with disease, and the various and inestimable advantages, civil and religious, which, secured under our happy frame of government, are continued to us unimpaired, demand of the whole American people sincere thanks to a benevolent Deity for the merciful dispensations of His providence.

¹¹³ (a) It would be unbecoming the representatives of this nation to assemble for the first time in this solemn temple without looking up to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe and imploring His blessing.

(b) Here and throughout our country may simple manners, pure morals, and true religion flourish forever!

¹¹⁴ Whilst we devoutly return thanks to the beneficent Being who has been pleased to breathe into them the spirit of conciliation and forgiveness, we are bound with peculiar gratitude to be thankful to Him that our own peace has been preserved through so perilous a season, and ourselves permitted quietly to cultivate the earth and to practice and improve those arts which tend to increase our comforts.

¹¹⁵ (a) When we assemble together, fellow citizens, to consider the state of our beloved country, our just attentions are first drawn to those pleasing circumstances which mark the goodness of that Being from whose favor they flow and the large measure of thankfulness we owe for His bounty.

(b) Another year has come around, and finds us still blessed with peace and friendship abroad; law, order, and religion at home; good affection and harmony with our Indian neighbors; our burthens lightened, yet our income sufficient for the public wants, and the produce of the year great beyond example.

(c) These, fellow citizens, are the circumstances under which we meet, and we remark with special satisfaction those which under the smiles of Providence result from the skill, industry, and order of our citizens, managing their own affairs in their own way and for their own use, unembarrassed by too much regulation, unoppressed by fiscal exactions.

¹¹⁶ While we regret the miseries in which we see others involved, let us bow with gratitude to that kind Providence which, inspiring with wisdom and moderation our late legislative councils while placed under the urgency of the greatest wrongs guarded us from hastily entering into the sanguinity contest and left us only to look on and pity its ravages.

¹¹⁷ Providence in His goodness gave it an early termination on this occasion and lessened the number of victims which have usually fallen before it.

¹¹⁸ Looking forward with anxiety to future destinies, I trust that in their steady character, unshaken by difficulties, in their love of liberty, obedience to law, and support of the public authorities, I see a sure guaranty of the permanence of our Republic; and, retiring from the charge of their affairs, I carry with me the consolation of a firm persuasion that Heaven has in store for our beloved country long ages to come of prosperity and happiness.

¹¹⁹ Recollecting always that for every advantage which may contribute to distinguish our lot from that to which others are doomed by the unhappy spirit of the times we are indebted to that Divine Providence whose goodness has been so remarkably extended to this rising nation, it becomes us to cherish a devout gratitude, and to implore from the same omnipotent source a blessing on the consultations and measures about to be undertaken for the welfare of our beloved country.

¹²⁰ Reserving for future occasions in the course of the session whatever other communications may claim your attention, I close the present by expressing my reliance, under the blessing of Divine Providence, on the judgement and patriotism which will guide your measures at a period particularly calling for united councils and flexible exertions for the welfare of our country, and by assuring you of the fidelity and alacrity with which my cooperation will be afforded.

¹²¹ I can not close this communication without expressing my deep sense of the crisis in which you are assembled, my confidence in a wise and honorable result to your deliberations, and assurances of the faithful zeal with which my cooperating duties will be discharged, invoking at the same time the blessing of Heaven on our beloved country and on all the means that may be employed in vindicating its rights and advancing its welfare.

¹²² (a) The appeal [for war against Great Britain] was accordingly made, in a just cause, to the Just and All-powerful Being who holds in His hand the chain of events and the destiny of nations.

(b) It remains only that, faithful to ourselves, entangled in no connections with the views of other powers, and ever ready to accept peace from the hand of justice, we prosecute the war with united counsels and with the ample faculties of the nation until peace be so obtained and as the only means under the Divine blessing of speedily obtaining it.

¹²³ (a) To this determination the best encouragement is derived from the success with which it has pleased the Almighty to bless our arms both on the land and on the water.

(b) It would be improper to close this communication without expressing a thankfulness in which all ought to unite for the abundance; for the preservation of our internal tranquility, and the stability of our free institutions, and, above all, for the light of divine truth and the protection of every man's conscience in the enjoyment of it.

(c) Beyond these their claims have never extended, and in contending for these we behold a subject for our congratulations in the daily testimonies of increasing harmony throughout the nation, and may humbly repose our trust in the smiles of Heaven on so righteous a cause.

¹²⁴ Having forborne to declare war until to other aggressions had been added the capture of near one thousand American vessels and the impressment of thousands of American sea faring citizens, and until a final declaration had been made by the Government of Great Britain that her hostile orders against our commerce would not be revoked but on conditions as impossible as unjust, whilst it was known that these orders would not otherwise cease but with a war which had lasted nearly twenty years, and which, according to appearances at that time, might last as many more; having manifested on every occasion and in every proper mode a sincere desire to arrest the effusion of blood and meet our enemy on the ground of justice and reconciliation, our beloved country, in still opposing to his persevering hostility all its energies, with an undiminished disposition toward peace and friendship on honorable terms, must carry with it the good wishes of the impartial world and the best hopes of support from an omnipotent and kind Providence.

¹²⁵ It remains for the guardians of the public welfare to persevere in that justice and good will toward other nations which invite a return of these sentiments toward the United States; to cherish institutions which guarantee their safety and their liberties, civil and religious; and to combine with a liberal system of foreign commerce an improvement of the national advantages and a protection and extension of the independent resources of our highly favored and happy country.

¹²⁶ In closing this communication I ought not to repress a sensibility, in which you will unite, to the happy lot of our country and to the goodness of a superintending Providence, to which we are indebted for it.

¹²⁷ (a) And as far as an economy of consumption, more than usual, may be necessary, our thankfulness is due to Providence for what is far more than a compensation, in the remarkable health which has distinguished the present year.

(b) These contemplations, sweetening the remnant of my days, will animate my prayers for the happiness of my beloved country, and a perpetuity of the institutions under which it is enjoyed.

¹²⁸ For advantages so numerous and highly important it is our duty to unite in grateful acknowledgements to that Omnipotent Being from whom they are derived, and in unceasing prayer that He will endow us with virtue and strength to maintain and hand them down in their utmost purity to our latest posterity.

¹²⁹ (a) For these inestimable blessings we can not but be grateful to that Providence which watches over the destiny of nations.

(b) Let us, then, unite in offering our most grateful acknowledgments for these blessings to the Divine Author of All Good.

¹³⁰ (a) When, then, we take into view the prosperous and happy condition of our country in all the great circumstances which constitute the felicity of a nation – every individual in the full enjoyment of all his rights, the Union blessed with plenty and rapidly rising to greatness under a National Government which operates with complete effect in every part without being felt in any except by the ample protection which it affords, and under State governments which perform their equal share, according to a wise distribution of power between them, in promoting the public happiness – it is impossible to behold so gratifying, so glorious a spectacle without being penetrated with the most profound and grateful acknowledgements to the Supreme Author of All Good for such manifold and inestimable blessings.

(b) Deeply impressed with these sentiments, I can not regard the pressures to which I have adverted otherwise than in the light of mild and instructive admonitions, warning us of dangers to be shunned in future, teaching us lessons of economy corresponding with the simplicity and purity of our institutions and best adapted to their support, evincing the connection and dependence which the various parts of our happy Union have on each other, thereby augmenting daily our social incorporation and adding by its strong ties new strength and vigor to the political; opening a wider range, and with new encouragement, to the industry and enterprise of our fellow citizens at home and abroad, and more especially by the multiplied proofs which it has accumulated of the great perfection of our most excellent system of Government, the powerful instrument in the hands of our All-merciful Creator in securing to us these blessings.

¹³¹ Deeply impressed with the blessings which we enjoy, and of which we have such manifold proofs, my mind is irresistibly drawn to that Almighty Being, the great source from whence they proceed and to whom our most grateful acknowledgments are due.

¹³² For those blessings we owe to Almighty God, from whom we derive them, and with profound reverence, our most grateful and unceasing acknowledgements.

¹³³ That these blessings may be preserved and perpetuated will be the object of my fervent and unceasing prayers to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe.

¹³⁴ (a) There has, indeed, rarely been a period in the history of civilized man in which the general condition of the Christian nations has been marked so extensively by peace and prosperity.

(b) The heroic struggles of the Greek themselves, in which our warmest sympathies as free men and Christians have been engaged, have continued to be maintained with vicissitudes of success adverse and favorable.

¹³⁵ (a) In taking a general survey of the concerns of our beloved country, with reference to subjects interesting to the common welfare, the first sentiment which impresses itself upon the mind is of gratitude to the Omnipotent Disposer of All Good for the continuance of the signal blessings of His providence, and especially for that health which to an unusual extent has prevailed within our borders, and for that abundance which in the vicissitudes of the seasons has been scattered with profusion over our land.

(b) Nor ought we less to ascribe to Him the glory that we are permitted to enjoy the bounties of His hand in peace and tranquility—in peace with all the other nations of the earth, in tranquility among ourselves.

(c) But moral, political, intellectual improvement are duties assigned by the Author of Our Existence to social no less than to individual man.

(d) While dwelling with pleasing satisfaction upon the superior excellence of our political institutions, let us not be unmindful that liberty is power; that the nation blessed with the largest portion of liberty must in proportion to its numbers be the most powerful nation upon earth, and that the tenure of power by man is, in the moral purposes of his Creator, upon condition that it shall be exercised to ends of beneficence, to improve the condition of himself and his fellow men.

(e) While foreign nations less blessed with that freedom which is power than ourselves are advancing with gigantic strides in the career of public improvement, were we to slumber in indolence or fold up our arms

and proclaim to the world that we are palsied by the will of our constituents, would it not be to cast away the bounties of Providence and doom ourselves to perpetual inferiority?

(f) And may He who searches the hearts of the children of men prosper your exertions to secure the blessings of peace and promote the highest welfare of your country.

¹³⁶ Then, glancing through the same lapse of time, in the condition of the individuals we see the first day marked with the fullness and vigor of youth, in the pledge of their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the cause of freedom and of man-kind; and on the last, extended on the bed of death, with but sense and sensibility left to breathe a last aspiration to Heaven of blessing upon their country, may we not humbly hope that to them too it was a pledge of transition from gloom to glory, and that while their mortal vestments were sinking into the clod of the valley their emancipated spirits were ascending to the bosom of their God!

¹³⁷ (a) The assemblage of the representatives of our Union in both Houses of the Congress at this time occurs under circumstances calling for the renewed homage of our grateful acknowledgments to the Giver of All Good.

(b) We are, as a people, increasing with unabated rapidity in population, wealth and national resources, and whatever differences of opinion exist among us with regard to the mode and the means by which we shall turn the beneficence of Heaven to the improvement of our own condition, there is yet a spirit animating us all which will not suffer the bounties of Providence to be showered upon us in vain, but will receive them with grateful hearts, and apply them with unwearied hands to the advancement of the general good.

(c) Since your last meeting at this place the 50th anniversary of the day when our independence was declared has been celebrated throughout our land, and on that day, while every heart was bounding with joy and every voice was tuned to gratulation, amid the blessings of freedom and independence which the sires of a former age had handed down to their children, two of the principal actors in that solemn scene -- the hand that penned the ever memorable Declaration and the voice that sustained it in debate -- were by one summons, at the distance of 700 miles from each other, called before the Judge of All to account for their deeds done upon earth.

¹³⁸ In that interval the never slumbering eye of a wise and beneficent Providence has continued its guardian care over the welfare of our beloved country; the blessing of health has continued generally to prevail throughout the land; the blessing of peace with our brethren of the human race has been enjoyed without interruption; internal quiet has left our fellow citizens in the full enjoyment of all their rights and in the free exercise of all their faculties, to pursue the impulse of their nature and the obligation of their duty in the improvement of their own condition; the productions of the soil, the exchanges of commerce, the vivifying labors of human industry, have combined to mingle in our cup a portion of enjoyment as large and liberal as the indulgence of Heaven has perhaps ever granted to the imperfect state of man upon earth; and as the purest of human felicity consists in its participation with others, it is no small addition to the sum of our national happiness at this time that peace and prosperity prevail to a degree seldom experienced over the whole habitable globe, presenting, though as yet with painful exceptions, a foretaste of that blessed period of promise when the lion shall lie down with the lamb and wars shall be no more.

¹³⁹ But in appropriating to ourselves their hunting grounds we have brought upon ourselves the obligation of providing them with subsistence; and when we have had the rare good fortune of teaching them the arts of civilization and the doctrines of Christianity we have unexpectedly found them forming in the midst of ourselves communities claiming to be independent of ours and rivals of sovereignty within the territories of the members of our Union.

¹⁴⁰ (a) If the enjoyment in profusion of the bounties of Providence forms a suitable subject of mutual gratulation and grateful acknowledgment, we are admonished at this return of the season when the representatives of the nation are assembled to deliberate upon their concerns to offer up the tribute of fervent and grateful hearts for the never failing mercies of Him who ruleth over all.

(b) He has again favored us with healthful seasons and abundant harvests; He has sustained us in peace with foreign countries and in tranquility within our borders; He has preserved us in the quiet and undisturbed possession of civil and religious liberty; He has crowned the year with His goodness, imposing on us no other condition than of improving for our own happiness the blessings bestowed by His hands, and, in the fruition of all His favors, of devoting his faculties with which we have been endowed by Him to His glory and to our own temporal and eternal welfare.

(c) Proceeding from a cause which humanity will view with concern, the sufferings of scarcity in distant lands, it yields a consolatory reflection that this scarcity is in no respect attributable to us; that it comes

from the dispensation of Him who ordains all in wisdom and goodness, and who permits evil itself only as an instrument of good; that, far from contributing to this scarcity, our agency will be applied only to the alleviation of its severity, and that in pouring forth from the abundance of our own garner the supplies which will partially restore plenty to those who are in need we shall ourselves reduce our stores and add to the price of our own bread, so as in some degree to participate in the wants which it will be the good fortune of our country to relieve.

¹⁴¹ (a) Upon this country more than any other has, in the providence of God, been cast the special guardianship of the great principle of adherence to written constitution.

(b) I now commend you, fellow citizens, to the guidance of Almighty God, with a full reliance on His merciful providence for the maintenance of our free institutions, and with an earnest supplication that what ever errors it may be my lot to commit in discharging the arduous duties which have devolved on me will find a remedy in the harmony and wisdom of your counsels.

¹⁴² (a) In communicating with you for the first time it is to me a source of unfeigned satisfaction, calling for mutual gratulation and devout thanks to a benign Providence, that we are at peace with all mankind, and that our country exhibits the most cheering evidence of general welfare and progressive improvement.

(b) In discharging the responsible trust confided to the Executive in this respect it is my settled purpose to ask nothing that is not clearly right and to submit to nothing that is wrong; and I flatter myself that, supported by the other branches of the Government and by the intelligence and patriotism of the people, we shall be able, under the protection of Providence, to cause all our just rights to be respected.

¹⁴³ (a) Our country, by the blessing of God, is not in a situation to invite aggression, and it will be our fault if she ever becomes so.

(b) Sincerely desirous to cultivate the most liberal and friendly relations with all; ever ready to fulfill our engagements with scrupulous fidelity; limiting our demands upon others to mere justice; holding ourselves ever ready to do unto them as we would wish to be done by, and avoiding even the appearance of undue partiality to any nation, it appears to me impossible that a simple and sincere application of our principles to our foreign relations can fail to place them ultimately upon the footing on which it is our wish they should rest. [Although many religions include some form of reciprocity, Jackson was probably alluding to "The Golden Rule" as described in the Bible: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." – Matthew 7:12 (KJV) and "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." – Luke 6:31 (KJV)]

(c) And is it supposed that the wandering savage has a stronger attachment to his home than the settled, civilized Christian?

¹⁴⁴ (a) The beneficent Author of All Good has granted to us during the present year health, peace, and plenty, and numerous causes for joy in the wonderful success which attends the progress of our free institutions.

(b) From a people exercising in the most unlimited degree the right of self-government, and enjoying, as derived from this proud characteristic, under the favor of Heaven, much of the happiness with which they are blessed; a people who can point in triumph to their free institutions and challenge comparison with the fruits they bear, as well as with the moderation, intelligence, and energy with which they are administered-- from such a people the deepest sympathy was to be expected in a struggle for the sacred principles of liberty, conducted in a spirit every way worthy of the cause, and crowned by a heroic moderation which has disarmed revolution of its terrors. [referring to the French]

(c) Under an overruling and merciful Providence the agency of this spirit has thus far been signalized in the prosperity and glory of our beloved country.

¹⁴⁵ But the removal of the Indians beyond the limits and jurisdiction of the States does not place them beyond the reach of philanthropic aid and Christian instruction.

¹⁴⁶ (a) But frequently and justly as you have been called on to be grateful for the bounties of Providence, at few periods have they been more abundantly or extensively bestowed than at the present; rarely, if ever, have we had greater reason to congratulate each other on the continued and increasing prosperity of our beloved country.

(b) A beneficent Providence has provided for their exercise and encouragement an extensive coast, indented by capacious bays, noble rivers, inland seas; with a country productive of every material for ship building and every commodity for gainful commerce, and filled with a population active, intelligent, well-informed, and fearless of danger.

(c) Let us be grateful for these blessings to the beneficent Being who has conferred them, and who suffers us to indulge a reasonable hope of their continuance and extension, while we neglect not the means by which they may be preserved.

(d) If we may dare to judge of His future designs by the manner in which His past favors have been bestowed, He has made our national prosperity to depend on the preservation of our liberties, our national force on our Federal Union, and our individual happiness on the maintenance of our State rights and wise institutions.

(e) While we continue so we shall by the blessing of Heaven go on in the happy career we have begun, and which has brought us in the short period of our political existence from a population of 3,000,000 to 13,000,000; from thirteen separate colonies to twenty-four united States; from weakness to strength; from a rank scarcely marked in the scale of nations to a high place in their respect.

(f) Should this treaty receive the proper sanction, a source of irritation will be stopped that has for so many years in some degree alienated from each other two nations who, from interest as well as the remembrance of early associations, ought to cherish the most friendly relations; an encouragement will be given for perseverance in the demands of justice by this new proof that if steadily pursued they will be listened to, and admonition will be offered to those powers, if any, which may be inclined to evade them that they will never be abandoned; above all, a just confidence will be inspired in our fellow citizens that their Government will exert all the powers with which they have invested it in support of their just claims upon foreign nations; at the same time that the frank acknowledgment and provision for the payment of those which were addressed to our equity, although unsupported by legal proof, affords a practical illustration of our submission to the divine rule of doing to others what we desire they should do unto us. [see discussion of "The Golden Rule" in note 43b above]

(g) At peace with all; having subjects of future difference with few, and those susceptible of easy adjustment; extending our commerce gradually on all sides and on none by any but the most liberal and mutually beneficial means, we may, by the blessing of Providence, hope for all that national prosperity which can be derived from an intercourse with foreign nations, guided by those eternal principles of justice and reciprocal good will which are binding as well upon States as the individuals of whom they are composed.

(h) In conclusion permit me to invoke that Power which superintends all governments to infuse into your deliberations at this important crisis of our history a spirit of mutual forbearance and conciliation.

¹⁴⁷ Although the pestilence which had traversed the Old World has entered our limits and extended its ravages over much of our land, it has pleased Almighty God to mitigate its severity and lessen the number of its victims compared with those who have fallen in most other countries over which it has spread its terrors.

¹⁴⁸ (a) If we fully appreciate our comparative condition, existing causes of discontent will appear unworthy of attention, and, with hearts of thankfulness to that divine Being who has filled our cup of prosperity, we shall feel our resolution strengthened to preserve and hand down to our posterity that liberty and that union which we have received from our fathers, and which constitute the sources and the shield of all our blessings.

(b) That the Almighty Ruler of the Universe may so direct our deliberations and overrule our acts as to make us instrumental in securing a result so dear to mankind is my most earnest and sincere prayer.

¹⁴⁹ (a) By the favor of Divine Providence health is again restored to us, peace reigns within our borders, abundance crowns the labors of our fields, commerce and domestic industry flourish and increase, and individual happiness rewards the private virtue and enterprise of our citizens.

(b) From this view of the state of the finances and the public engagements yet to be fulfilled you will perceive that if Providence permits me to meet you at another session I shall have the high gratification of announcing to you that the national debt is extinguished.

¹⁵⁰ If she should continue to refuse that act of acknowledged justice and, in violation of the law of nations, make reprisals on our part the occasion of hostilities against the United States, she would but add violence to injustice, and could not fail to expose herself to the just censure of civilized nations and to the retributive judgments of Heaven. [referring to the failure of France to compensate American citizens for past damages to property]

¹⁵¹ Divine Providence has favored us with general health, with rich rewards in the fields of agriculture and in every branch of labor, and with peace to cultivate and extend the various resources which employ the virtue and enterprise of our citizens.

¹⁵² Never in any former period of our history have we had greater reason than we now have to be thankful to Divine Providence for the blessings of health and general prosperity.

¹⁵³ (a) Our gratitude is due to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and I invite you to unite with me in offering to Him fervent supplications that His providential care may ever be extended to those who follow us, enabling them to avoid the dangers and the horrors of war consistently with a just and indispensable regard to the rights and honor of our country.

(b) All that has occurred during my Administration is calculated to inspire me with increased confidence in the stability of our institutions; and should I be spared to enter upon that retirement which is so suitable to my age and infirm health and so much desired by me in other respects, I shall not cease to invoke that beneficent Being to whose providence we are already so signally indebted for the continuance of His blessings on our beloved country.

¹⁵⁴ We have reason to renew the expression of our devout gratitude to the Giver of All Good for His benign protection.

¹⁵⁵ (a) These blessings, which evince the care and beneficence of Providence, call for our devout and fervent gratitude.

(b) All forms of religion have united for the first time to diffuse charity and piety, because for the first time in the history of nations all have been totally untrammelled and absolutely free.

¹⁵⁶ They have therefore been attended with no other result than to increase, by the confidence thus reposed in me, my obligations to maintain with religious exactness the cardinal principles that govern our intercourse with other nations.

¹⁵⁷ (a) But notwithstanding these adverse circumstances, that general prosperity which has been heretofore so bountifully bestowed upon us by the Author of All Good still continues to call for our warmest gratitude.

(b) Our surplus profits, the energy and industry of our population, and the wonderful advantages which Providence has bestowed upon our country in its climate, its various productions, indispensable to other nations, will in due time afford abundant means to perfect the most useful of those objects for which the States have been plunging themselves of late in embarrassment and debt, without imposing on ourselves or our children such fearful burdens.

¹⁵⁸ Our devout gratitude is due to the Supreme Being for having graciously continued to our beloved country through the vicissitudes of another year the invaluable blessings of health, plenty, and peace.

¹⁵⁹ (a) Through the year which is now drawing to a close peace has been in our borders and plenty in our habitations, and although disease has visited some few portions of the land with distress and mortality, yet in general the health of the people has been preserved, and we are all called upon by the highest obligations of duty to renew our thanks and our devotion to our Heavenly Parent, who has continued to vouchsafe to us the eminent blessings which surround us and who has so signally crowned the year with His goodness.

(b) If we find ourselves increasing beyond example in numbers, in strength, in wealth, in knowledge, in everything which promotes human and social happiness, let us ever remember our dependence for all these on the protection and merciful dispensations of Divine Providence.

¹⁶⁰ (a) The question of peace or war between the United States and Great Britain is a question of the deepest interest, not only to themselves, but to the civilized world, since it is scarcely possible that a war could exist between them without endangering the peace of Christendom.

(b) The schoolmaster and the missionary are found side by side, and the remnants of what were once numerous and powerful nations may yet be preserved as the builders up of a new name for themselves and their posterity. [referring to policy regarding Indian tribes]

¹⁶¹ (a) We have continued reason to express our profound gratitude to the Great Creator of All Things for numberless benefits conferred upon us as a people.

(b) The health of the country, with partial exceptions, has for the past year been well preserved, and under their free and wise institutions the United States are rapidly advancing toward the consummation of the high destiny which an overruling Providence seems to have marked out for them.

(c) Such are the circumstances under which you now assemble in your respective chambers and which should lead us to unite in praise and thanksgiving to that great Being who made us and who preserves us as a nation.

¹⁶² (a) If any people ever had cause to render up thanks to the Supreme Being for parental care and protection extended to them in all the trials and difficulties to which they have been from time to time exposed, we certainly are that people.

(b) From the first settlement of our forefathers on this continent, through the dangers attendant upon the occupation of a savage wilderness, through a long period of colonial dependence, through the War of the Revolution, in the wisdom which led to the adoption of the existing forms of republican government, in the hazards incident to a war subsequently waged with one of the most powerful nations of the earth, in the increase of our population, in the spread of the arts and sciences, and in the strength and durability conferred on political institutions emanating from the people and sustained by their will, the superintendence of an overruling Providence has been plainly visible.

(c) As preparatory, therefore, to entering once more upon the high duties of legislation, it becomes us humbly to acknowledge our dependence upon Him as our guide and protector and to implore a continuance of His parental watchfulness over our beloved country.

(d) The Creator of the Universe has given man the earth for his resting place and its fruits for his subsistence.

(e) When, under a dispensation of Divine Providence, I succeeded to the presidential office, the state of public affairs was embarrassing and critical.

(f) I shall be permitted to congratulate the country that under an overruling Providence peace was preserved without a sacrifice of the national honor; the war in Florida was brought to a speedy termination; a large portion of the claims on Mexico have been fully adjudicated and are in a course of payment, while justice has been rendered to us in other matters by other nations; confidence between man and man is in a great measure restored and the credit of this Government fully and perfectly reestablished; commerce is becoming more and more extended in its operations and manufacturing and mechanical industry once more reap the rewards of skill and labor honestly applied; the operations of trade rest on a sound currency and the rates of exchange are reduced to their lowest amount.

¹⁶³ She has issued decrees and proclamations, preparatory to the commencement of hostilities, full of threats revolting to humanity, and which if carried into effect would arouse the attention of all Christendom.

¹⁶⁴ (a) We have continued cause for expressing our gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for the benefits and blessings which our country, under His kind providence, has enjoyed during the past year.

(b) The world has witnessed its rapid growth in wealth and population, and under the guide and direction of a superintending Providence the developments of the past may be regarded but as the shadowing forth of the mighty future.

(c) Our prayers should evermore be offered up to the Father of the Universe for His wisdom to direct us in the path of our duty so as to enable us to consummate these high purposes.

¹⁶⁵ In his language on a similar occasion to the present, "I now commend you, fellow-citizens, to the guidance of Almighty God, with a full reliance on His merciful providence for the maintenance of our free institutions, and with an earnest supplication that whatever errors it may be my lot to commit in discharging the arduous duties which have devolved on me will find a remedy in the harmony and wisdom of your counsels."

¹⁶⁶ (a) Under the blessings of Divine Providence and the benign influence of our free institutions, it stands before the world a spectacle of national happiness.

(b) It becomes us in humility to make our devout acknowledgments to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for the inestimable civil and religious blessings with which we are favored.

(c) The enjoyment of contemplating, at the advanced age of near fourscore years, the happy condition of his country cheered the last hours of Andrew Jackson, who departed this life in the tranquil hope of a blessed immortality.

¹⁶⁷ Our devout and sincere acknowledgments are due to the gracious Giver of All Good for the numberless blessings which our beloved country enjoys.

¹⁶⁸ To remove these false impressions, our commanders in the field were directed scrupulously to respect their religion, their churches, and their church property, which were in no manner to be violated; they were directed also to respect the rights of persons and property of all who should not take up arms against us. [referring to actions related to the Mexican-American war]

¹⁶⁹ (a) An all wise Creator directed and guarded us in our infant struggle for freedom and has constantly watched over our surprising progress until we have become one of the great nations of the earth.

(b) In the enjoyment of the bounties of Providence at home such as have rarely fallen to the lot of any people, it is cause of congratulation that our intercourse with all the powers of the earth except Mexico continues to be of an amicable character.

(c) Invoking the blessing of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe upon your deliberations, it will be my highest duty, no less than my sincere pleasure, to cooperate with you in all measures which may tend to promote the honor and enduring welfare of our common country.

¹⁷⁰ Under the benignant providence of Almighty God the representatives of the States and of the people are again brought together to deliberate for the public good.

¹⁷¹ (a) The gratitude of the nation to the Sovereign Arbiter of All Human Events should be commensurate with the boundless blessings which we enjoy.

(b) Invoking the blessings of the Almighty upon your deliberations at your present important session, my ardent hope is that in a spirit of harmony and concord you may be guided to wise results, and such as may redound to the happiness, the honor, and the glory of our beloved country.

¹⁷² (a) During the past year we have been blessed by a kind Providence with an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and although the destroying angel for a time visited extensive portions of our territory with the ravages of a dreadful pestilence, yet the Almighty has at length deigned to stay his hand and to restore the inestimable blessing of general health to a people who have acknowledged His power, deprecated His wrath, and implored His merciful protection.

(b) It is a proper theme of thanksgiving to Him who rules the destinies of nations that we have been able to maintain amidst all these contests an independent and neutral position toward all belligerent powers.

(c) With the strict observance of this rule and the other injunctions of the Constitution, with a sedulous inculcation of that respect and love for the Union of the States which our fathers cherished and enjoined upon their children, and with the aid of that overruling Providence which has so long and so kindly guarded our liberties and institutions, we may reasonably expect to transmit them, with their innumerable blessings, to the remotest posterity. [The rule referred to is checks and balances]

¹⁷³ (a) Being suddenly called in the midst of the last session of Congress by a painful dispensation of Divine Providence to the responsible station which I now hold, I contented myself with such communications to the Legislature as the exigency of the moment seemed to require.

(b) And now, fellow-citizens, I can not bring this communication to a close without invoking you to join me in humble and devout thanks to the Great Ruler of Nations for the multiplied blessings which He has graciously bestowed upon us.

(c) His hand, so often visible in our preservation, has stayed the pestilence, saved us from foreign wars and domestic disturbances, and scattered plenty throughout the land.

(d) And while deeply penetrated with gratitude for the past, let us hope that His all-wise providence will so guide our counsels as that they shall result in giving satisfaction to our constituents, securing the peace of the country, and adding new strength to the united Government under which we live.

¹⁷⁴ None can look back to the dangers which are passed or forward to the bright prospect before us without feeling a thrill of gratification, at the same time that he must be impressed with a grateful sense of our profound obligations to a beneficent Providence, whose paternal care is so manifest in the happiness of this highly favored land.

¹⁷⁵ (a) Our grateful thanks are due to an all-merciful Providence, not only for staying the pestilence which in different forms has desolated some of our cities, but for crowning the labors of the husbandman with an abundant harvest and the nation generally with the blessings of peace and prosperity.

(b) Men of the Revolution, who drew the sword against the oppressions of the mother country and pledged to Heaven "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor" to maintain their freedom, could never have been actuated by so unworthy a motive.

(c) We owe these blessings, under Heaven, to the happy Constitution and Government which were bequeathed to us by our fathers, and which it is our sacred duty to transmit in all their integrity to our children

¹⁷⁶ (a) Although disease, assuming at one time the characteristics of a widespread and devastating pestilence, has left its sad traces upon some portions of our country, we have still the most abundant cause for reverent thankfulness to God for an accumulation of signal mercies showered upon us as a nation.

(b) Ours is almost, if not absolutely, the solitary power of Christendom having a surplus revenue drawn immediately from imposts on commerce, and therefore measured by the spontaneous enterprise and national prosperity of the country, with such indirect relation to agriculture, manufactures, and the products of the earth and sea as to violate no constitutional doctrine and yet vigorously promote the general welfare.

¹⁷⁷ (a) It is well that a consciousness of rapid advancement and increasing strength be habitually associated with an abiding sense of dependence upon Him who holds in His hands the destiny of men and of nations.

(b) Recognizing the wisdom of the broad principle of absolute religious toleration proclaimed in our fundamental law, and rejoicing in the benign influence which it has exerted upon our social and political condition, I should shrink from a clear duty did I fail to express my deepest conviction that we can place no secure reliance upon any apparent progress if it be not sustained by national integrity, resting upon the great truths affirmed and illustrated by divine revelation.

¹⁷⁸ (a) In the present, therefore, as in the past, we find ample grounds for reverent thankfulness to the God of grace and providence for His protecting care and merciful dealings with us as a people.

(b) As individuals we can not repress sympathy with human suffering nor regret for the causes which produce it; as a nation we are reminded that whatever interrupts the peace or checks the prosperity of any part of Christendom tends more or less to involve our own.

(c) We have to maintain inviolate the great doctrine of the inherent right of popular self-government; to reconcile the largest liberty of the individual citizen with complete security of the public order; to render cheerful obedience to the laws of the land, to unite in enforcing their execution, and to frown indignantly on all combinations to resist them; to harmonize a sincere and ardent devotion to the institutions of religions faith with the most universal religious toleration; to preserve the rights of all by causing each to respect those of the other; to carry forward every social improvement to the uttermost limit of human perfectibility, by the free action of mind upon mind, not by the obtrusive intervention of misapplied force; to uphold the integrity and guard the limitations of our organic law; to preserve sacred from all touch of usurpation, as the very palladium of our political salvation, the reserved rights and powers of the several States and of the people; to cherish with loyal fealty and devoted affection this Union, as the only sure foundation on which the hopes of civil liberty rest; to administer government with vigilant integrity and rigid economy; to cultivate peace and friendship with foreign nations, and to demand and exact equal justice from all, but to do wrong to none; to eschew intermeddling with the national policy and the domestic repose of other governments, and to repel it from our own; never to shrink from war when the rights and the honor of the country call us to arms, but to cultivate in preference the arts of peace, seek enlargement of the rights of neutrality, and elevate and liberalize the intercourse of nations; and by such just and honorable means, and such only, whilst exalting the condition of the Republic, to assure to it the legitimate influence and the benign authority of a great example amongst all the powers of Christendom.

(d) Under the solemnity of these convictions the blessing of Almighty God is earnestly invoked to attend upon your deliberations and upon all the counsels and acts of the Government, to the end that, with common zeal and common efforts, we may, in humble submission to the divine will, cooperate for the promotion of the supreme good of these United States.

¹⁷⁹ I rely confidently on the patriotism of the people, on the dignity and self-respect of the States, on the wisdom of Congress, and, above all, on the continued gracious favor of Almighty God to maintain against all enemies, whether at home or abroad, the sanctity of the Constitution and the integrity of the Union.

¹⁸⁰ I shall prepare to surrender the Executive trust to my successor and retire to private life with sentiments of profound gratitude to the good Providence which during the period of my Administration has vouchsafed to carry the country through many difficulties, domestic and foreign, and which enables me to contemplate the spectacle of amicable and respectful relations between ours and all other governments and the establishment of constitutional order and tranquility throughout the Union.

¹⁸¹ But first and above all, our thanks are due to Almighty God for the numerous benefits which He has bestowed upon this people, and our united prayers ought to ascend to Him that He would continue to bless our great Republic in time to come as He has blessed it in time past.

¹⁸² (a) Whilst Governor Young has been both governor and superintendent of Indian affairs throughout this period, he has been at the same time the head of the church called the Latter-day Saints, and professes to govern its members and dispose of their property by direct inspiration and authority from the Almighty.

(b) His power has been, therefore, absolute over both church and state.

(c) The people of Utah almost exclusively belong to this church, and believing with a fanatical spirit that he is governor of the Territory by divine appointment, they obey his commands as if these were direct revelations from Heaven.

(d) With the religious opinions of the Mormons, as long as they remained mere opinions, however deplorable in themselves and revolting to the moral and religious sentiments of all Christendom, I had no right to interfere.

(e) He knows that the continuance of his despotic power depends upon the exclusion of all settlers from the Territory except those who will acknowledge his divine mission and implicitly obey his will, and that an

enlightened public opinion there would soon prostrate institutions at war with the laws both of God and man.

¹⁸³ I am happy to announce that through the energetic yet conciliatory efforts of our consul-general in Japan a new treaty has been concluded with that Empire, which may be expected materially to augment our trade and intercourse in that quarter and remove from our countrymen the disabilities which have heretofore been imposed upon the exercise of their religion.

¹⁸⁴ When we compare the condition of the country at the present day with what it was one year ago at the meeting of Congress, we have much reason for gratitude to that Almighty Providence which has never failed to interpose for our relief at the most critical periods of our history.

¹⁸⁵ (a) They will resolve that the Constitution and the Union shall not be endangered by rash counsels, knowing that should "the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken at the fountain" human power could never reunite the scattered and hostile fragments. [Paraphrasing without attribution Ecclesiastes 12:6. The complete verse reads: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. (KJV)]

(b) The light and the blessings of Christianity have been extended to them, and both their moral and physical condition has been greatly improved.

(c) In this manner Christianity and civilization may gradually penetrate the existing gloom.

¹⁸⁶ (a) But we are obliged as a Christian and moral nation to consider what would be the effect upon unhappy Africa itself if we should reopen the slave trade.

(b) The numerous victims required to supply it would convert the whole slave coast into a perfect pandemonium, for which this country would be held responsible in the eyes both of God and man.

¹⁸⁷ (a) Our deep and heartfelt gratitude is due to that Almighty Power which has bestowed upon us such varied and numerous blessings throughout the past year.

(b) Indeed, notwithstanding our demerits, we have much reason to believe from the past events in our history that we have enjoyed the special protection of Divine Providence ever since our origin as a nation.

(c) May we ever be under the divine guidance and protection.

¹⁸⁸ (a) It is my conviction that this fatal period has not yet arrived, and my prayer to God is that He would preserve the Constitution and the Union throughout all generations.

(b) As sovereign States, they, and they alone, are responsible before God and the world for the slavery existing among them.

(c) Surely under these circumstances we ought to be restrained from present action by the precept of Him who spake as man never spoke, that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." [Quoting without attribution Matthew 6:34 (KJV)].

(d) This would be at war with every principle of justice and of Christian charity. [Failure of president-elect to disregard his Constitutional duty to uphold the law].

(e) He is bound by solemn oath, before God and the country, "to take care that the laws be faithfully executed," and from this obligation he can not be absolved by any human power.

¹⁸⁹ It surely ought to be the prayer of every Christian and patriot that such expeditions may never again receive countenance in our country or depart from our shores. [Organizing military expeditions in the United States to invade other countries].

¹⁹⁰ (a) Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and has been implanted in the heart of man by his Creator for the wisest purpose; and no political union, however fraught with blessings and benefits in all other respects, can long continue if the necessary consequence be to render the homes and the firesides of nearly half the parties to it habitually and hopelessly insecure.

(b) When we take a retrospect of what was then our condition and contrast this with its material prosperity at the time of the late Presidential election, we have abundant reason to return our grateful thanks to that merciful Providence which has never forsaken us as a nation in all our past trials.

¹⁹¹ In the midst of unprecedented political troubles we have cause of great gratitude to God for unusual good health and most abundant harvests.

¹⁹² With a reliance on Providence all the more firm and earnest, let us proceed in the great task which events have devolved upon us.

¹⁹³ (a) "One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever." [Quoting without attribution Ecclesiastes 1:4 (KJV)]

(b) The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just--a way which if followed the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless.

¹⁹⁴ Since your last annual assembling another year of health and bountiful harvests has passed, and while it has not pleased the Almighty to bless us with a return of peace, we can but press on, guided by the best light He gives us, trusting that in His own good time and wise way all will yet be well.

¹⁹⁵ For these, and especially for the improved condition of our national affairs, our renewed and profoundest gratitude to God is due.

¹⁹⁶ Sound policy and our imperative duty to these wards of the Government demand our anxious and constant attention to their material well-being, to their progress in the arts of civilization, and, above all, to that moral training which under the blessing of Divine Providence will confer upon them the elevated and sanctifying influences, the hopes and consolations, of the Christian faith. [Re: Indian policy]

¹⁹⁷ Again the blessings of health and abundant harvests claim our profoundest gratitude to Almighty God.

¹⁹⁸ I regard our immigrants as one of the principal replenishing streams which are appointed by Providence to repair the ravages of internal war and its wastes of national strength and health. [Re: policy encouraging immigration]

¹⁹⁹ To express gratitude to God in the name of the people for the preservation of the United States is my first duty in addressing you.

²⁰⁰ (a) The hand of Divine Providence was never more plainly visible in the affairs of men than in the framing and the adopting of that instrument.

(b) We adore the Invisible Hand which has led the American people, through so many difficulties, to cherish a conscientious responsibility for the destiny of republican liberty.

(c) Here religion, released from political connection with the civil government, refuses to subserve the craft of statesmen, and becomes in its independence the spiritual life of the people.

(d) Who will not join with me in the prayer that the Invisible Hand which has led us through the clouds that gloomed around our path will so guide us onward to a perfect restoration of fraternal affection that we of this day may be able to transmit our great inheritance of State governments in all their rights, of the General Government in its whole constitutional vigor, to our posterity, and they to theirs through countless generations?

²⁰¹ An all-wise and merciful Providence has abated the pestilence which visited our shores, leaving its calamitous traces upon some portions of our country.

²⁰² Indiscriminate vengeance upon classes, sects, and parties, or upon whole communities, for offenses committed by a portion of them against the governments to which they owed obedience was common in the barbarous ages of the world; but Christianity and civilization have made such progress that recourse to a punishment so cruel and unjust would meet with the condemnation of all unprejudiced and right-minded men.

²⁰³ Let us earnestly hope that before the expiration of our respective terms of service, now rapidly drawing to a close, an all-wise Providence will so guide our counsels as to strengthen and preserve the Federal Unions, inspire reverence for the Constitution, restore prosperity and happiness to our whole people, and promote "on earth peace, good will toward men."

²⁰⁴ A system which looks to the extinction of a race is too horrible for a nation to adopt without entailing upon itself the wrath of all Christendom and engendering in the citizen a disregard for human life and the rights of others, dangerous to society.

²⁰⁵ In coming before you for the first time as Chief Magistrate of this great nation, it is with gratitude to the Giver of All Good for the many benefits we enjoy.

²⁰⁶ (a) Indian agencies being civil offices, I determined to give all the agencies to such religious denominations as had heretofore established missionaries among the Indians, and perhaps to some other denominations who would undertake the work on the same terms--i.e., as a missionary work.

(b) The societies selected are allowed to name their own agents, subject to the approval of the Executive, and are expected to watch over them and aid them as missionaries, to Christianize and civilize the Indian, and to train him in the arts of peace.

(c) I entertain the confident hope that the policy now pursued will in a few years bring all the Indians upon reservations, where they will live in houses, and have schoolhouses and churches, and will be pursuing peaceful and self-sustaining avocations, and where they may be visited by the law-abiding white man with the same impunity that he now visits the civilized white settlements.

²⁰⁷ We have, through a kind Providence, been blessed with abundant crops, and have been spared from complications and war with foreign nations.

²⁰⁸ (a) It is not with the religion of the self-styled Saints that we are now dealing, but with their practices.

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- (b) They will be protected in the worship of God according to the dictates of their consciences, but they will not be permitted to violate the laws under the cloak of religion.
- (c) Through the exertions of the various societies of Christians to whom has been entrusted the execution of the policy, and the board of commissioners authorized by the law of April 10, 1869, many tribes of Indians have been induced to settle upon reservations, to cultivate the soil, to perform productive labor of various kinds, and to partially accept civilization.
- (d) I recommend liberal appropriations to carry out the Indian peace policy, not only because it is humane, Christian like, and economical, but because it is right.
- ²⁰⁹ The past year has, under a wise Providence, been one of general prosperity to the nation.
- ²¹⁰ It was but a feeble step toward emancipation, but it was the recognition of right, and was hailed as such, and exhibited Spain in harmony with sentiments of humanity and of justice and in sympathy with the other powers of the Christian and civilized world.
- ²¹¹ In transmitting to you this my fourth annual message it is with thankfulness to the Giver of All Good that as a nation we have been blessed for the past year with peace at home, peace abroad, and a general prosperity vouchsafed to but few peoples.
- ²¹² All these liberal steps were taken in the face of a violent opposition directed by the reactionary slaveholders of Havana, who are vainly striving to stay the march of ideas which has terminated slavery in Christendom, Cuba only excepted.
- ²¹³ (a) From the fall of Adam for his transgression to the present day no nation has ever been free from threatened danger to its prosperity and happiness.
- (b) The same disregard of the laws of civilized warfare and of the just demands of humanity which has heretofore called forth expressions of condemnation from the nations of Christendom has continued to blacken the sad scene.
- ²¹⁴ (a) A large association of ignorant men can not for any considerable period oppose a successful resistance to tyranny and oppression from the educated few, but will inevitably sink into acquiescence to the will of intelligence, whether directed by the demagogue or by priestcraft.
- (b) As the primary step, therefore, to our advancement in all that has marked our progress in the past century, I suggest for your earnest consideration, and most earnestly recommend it, that a constitutional amendment be submitted to the legislatures of the several States for ratification, making it the duty of each of the several States to establish and forever maintain free public schools adequate to the education of all the children in the rudimentary branches within their respective limits, irrespective of sex, color, birthplace, or religions; forbidding the teaching in said schools of religious, atheistic, or pagan tenets; and prohibiting the granting of any school funds or school taxes, or any part thereof, either by legislative, municipal, or other authority, for the benefit or in aid, directly or indirectly, of any religious sect or denomination, or in aid or for the benefit of any other object of any nature or kind whatever.
- (c) It is the accumulation of vast amounts of untaxed church property. [Re: ‘...an evil that, if permitted to continue, will probably lead to great trouble in our land...’]
- (d) In 1850, I believe, the church property of the United States which paid no tax, municipal or State, amounted to about \$83,000,000.
- (e) In a growing country, where real estate enhances so rapidly with time as in the United States, there is scarcely a limit to the wealth that may be acquired by corporations, religious or otherwise, if allowed to retain real estate without taxation.
- (f) I would suggest the taxation of all property equally, whether church or corporation, exempting only the last resting place of the dead and possibly, with proper restrictions, church edifices.
- (g) That polygamy should exist in a free, enlightened, and Christian country, without the power to punish so flagrant a crime against decency and morality, seems preposterous.
- (h) Declare church and state forever separate and distinct, but each free within their proper spheres; and that all church property shall bear its own proportion of taxation.
- ²¹⁵ The inhabitants of these islands, having made considerable progress in Christian civilization and the development of trade, are doubtful of their ability to maintain peace and independence without the aid of some stronger power.
- ²¹⁶ (a) With devout gratitude to the bountiful Giver of All Good, I congratulate you that at the beginning of your first regular session you find our country blessed with health and peace and abundant harvests, and with encouraging prospects of an early return of general prosperity.

(b) We should avail ourselves of all the opportunities which Providence has here placed at our command to promote the general intelligence of the people and increase the conditions most favorable to the success and perpetuity of our institutions.

²¹⁷ Our heartfelt gratitude is due to the Divine Being who holds in His hands the destinies of nations for the continued bestowal during the last year of countless blessings upon our country.

²¹⁸ The members of the Forty-sixth Congress have assembled in their first regular session under circumstances calling for mutual congratulation and grateful acknowledgment to the Giver of All Good for the large and unusual measure of national prosperity which we now enjoy.

²¹⁹ (a) Wherever general education is found, peace, virtue, and social order prevail and civil and religious liberty are secure.

(b) Religious liberty and the separation of church and state are among the elementary ideas of free institutions. [referring to Mormon control of the Utah Territorial Government]

(c) The Government of the United States has also lost no opportunity to urge upon that of the Emperor of Morocco the necessity, in accordance with the humane and enlightened spirit of the age, of putting an end to the persecutions, which have been so prevalent in that country, of persons of a faith other than the Moslem, and especially of the Hebrew residents of Morocco.

²²⁰ By the favor of Divine Providence we have been blessed during the past year with health, with abundant harvests, with profitable employment for all our people, and with contentment at home, and with peace and friendship with other nations.

²²¹ The existing statute for the punishment of this odious crime, so revolting to the moral and religious sense of Christendom, has been persistently and contemptuously violated ever since its enactment. [Re: polygamy]

²²² (a) For these manifestations of His favor we owe to Him who holds our destiny in His hands the tribute of our grateful devotion.

(b) To that mysterious exercise of His will which has taken from us the loved and illustrious citizen who was but lately the head of the nation we bow in sorrow and submission.

²²³ The closing year has been replete with blessings, for which we owe to the Giver of All Good our reverent acknowledgment.

²²⁴ (a) While there have arisen during the year no grave questions affecting the status in the Russian Empire of American citizens of other faiths than that held by the national church, this Government remains firm in its conviction that the rights of its citizens abroad should be in no wise affected by their religious belief.

(b) I favor, therefore, the repeal of the act upon which the existing government depends, the assumption by the National Legislature of the entire political control of the Territory, and the establishment of a commission with such powers and duties as shall be delegated to it by law.

(c) It will be perceived that they discountenance any political or religious tests for admission to those offices of the public service to which the statute relates.

²²⁵ (a) The reasons advanced were such as could not be acquiesced in without violation of my oath of office and the precepts of the Constitution, since they necessarily involved a limitation in favor of a foreign government upon the right of selection by the Executive and required such an application of a religious test as a qualification for office under the United States as would have resulted in the practical disfranchisement of a large class of our citizens and the abandonment of a vital principle in our Government.

(b) The history of all the progress which has been made in the civilization of the Indian I think will disclose the fact that the beginning has been religious teaching, followed by or accompanying secular education.

(c) While the self-sacrificing and pious men and women who have aided in this good work by their independent endeavor have for their reward the beneficent results of their labor and the consciousness of Christian duty well performed, their valuable services should be fully acknowledged by all who under the law are charged with the control and management of our Indian wards.

(d) They further report that while there can not be found upon the registration lists of voters the name of a man actually guilty of polygamy, and while none of that class are holding office, yet at the last election in the Territory all the officers elected, except in one county, were men who, though not actually living in the practice of polygamy, subscribe to the doctrine of polygamous marriages as a divine revelation and a law unto all higher and more binding upon the conscience than any human law, local or national.

(e) The strength, the perpetuity, and the destiny of the nation rest upon our homes, established by the law of God, guarded by parental care, regulated by parental authority, and sanctified by parental love.

(f) The mothers of our land, who rule the nation as they mold the characters and guide the actions of their sons, live according to God's holy ordinances, and each, secure and happy in the exclusive love of the father of her children, sheds the warm light of true womanhood, unperverted and unpolluted, upon all within her pure and wholesome family circle.

(g) Since the people upholding polygamy in our Territories are reinforced by immigration from other lands, I recommend that a law be passed to prevent the importation of Mormons into the country.

²²⁶ Civilization, with the busy hum of industry and the influences of Christianity, surrounds these people at every point.

²²⁷ (a) The pomp and glitter of governments less free offered no temptation and presented no delusion to the plain people who, side by side, in friendly competition, wrought for the ennoblement and dignity of man, for the solution of the problem of free government, and for the achievement of the grand destiny awaiting the land which God had given them.

(b) The Empire of Brazil, in abolishing the last vestige of slavery among Christian nations, called forth the earnest congratulations of this Government in expression of the cordial sympathies of our people.

²²⁸ (a) It remains to make the most of it, and when that shall be done the curse will be lifted, the Indian race saved, and the sin of their oppression redeemed. [Referring to the capacity of Indians to learn]

(b) The suggestions they make touching desirable amendments to the laws relating to licenses granted for carrying on the retail traffic in spirituous liquors, to the observance of Sunday, to the proper assessment and collection of taxes, to the speedy punishment of minor offenders, and to the management and control of the reformatory and charitable institutions supported by Congressional appropriations are commended to careful consideration. [Referring to the Commissioners for the District of Columbia]

²²⁹ But while the commercial results which it is hoped will follow this conference are worthy of pursuit and of the great interests they have excited, it is believed that the crowning benefit will be found in the better securities which may be devised for the maintenance of peace among all American nations and the settlement of all contentions by methods that a Christian civilization can approve.

²³⁰ The friendliness of the Persian Government continues to be shown by its generous treatment of Americans engaged in missionary labors and by the cordial disposition of the Shah to encourage the enterprise of our citizens in the development of Persian resources.

²³¹ Now, it is quite true that the law should not attempt to deal with the faith or belief of anyone; but it is quite another thing, and the only safe thing, so to deal with the Territory of Utah as that those who believe polygamy to be rightful shall not have the power to make it lawful.

²³² But the fact should not be overlooked that the doctrine or belief of the church that polygamous marriages are rightful and supported by divine revelation remains unchanged.

²³³ By the revival of antisemitic laws [in Russia], long in abeyance, great numbers of those unfortunate people ["Hebrews"] have been constrained to abandon their homes and leave the Empire by reason of the impossibility of finding subsistence within the pale to which it is sought to confine them.

²³⁴ (a) Correspondence is on foot touching the practice of Russian consuls within the jurisdiction of the United States to interrogate citizens as to their race and religious faith, and upon ascertainment thereof to deny to Jews authentication of passports or legal documents for use in Russia. [RE: possibility this practice would infringe on 'the treaty rights of our citizens.']

(b) This movement on our part was in no sense meant as a gratuitous entanglement of the United States in the so-called Eastern question nor as an officious interference with the right and duty which belong by treaty to certain great European powers calling for their intervention in political matters affecting the good government and religious freedom of the non-Mussulman subjects of the Sultan, but it arose solely from our desire to have an accurate knowledge of the conditions in our efforts to care for those entitled to our protection. [RE: efforts by the United States to ascertain the validity of reported massacres of Christians in Turkey.]

²³⁵ (a) Instead, however, of welcoming a softened disposition or protective intervention, we have been afflicted by continued and not unfrequent reports of the wanton destruction of homes and the bloody butchery of men, women, and children, made martyrs to their profession of Christian faith.

(b) I do not believe that the present somber prospect in Turkey will be long permitted to offend the sight of Christendom.

(c) It so mars the humane and enlightened civilization that belongs to the close of the nineteenth century that it seems hardly possible that the earnest demand of good people throughout the Christian world for its corrective treatment will remain unanswered.

²³⁶ During all those years an utter disregard of the laws of civilized warfare and of the just demands of humanity, which called forth expressions of condemnation from the nations of Christendom, continued unabated.

²³⁷ Their meeting [the Fifty-fifth Congress] occurs under felicitous conditions, justifying sincere congratulation and calling for our grateful acknowledgment to a beneficent Providence which has so signally blessed and prospered us as a nation.

²³⁸ In tracing these events we are constantly reminded of our obligations to the Divine Master for His watchful care over us and His safe guidance, for which the nation makes reverent acknowledgment and offers humble prayer for the continuance of His favor.

²³⁹ Never has this Nation had more abundant cause than during the past year for thankfulness to God for manifold blessings and mercies, for which we make reverent acknowledgment.

²⁴⁰ (a) In the organization of the volunteer regiments authorized by the act of March 2, 1899, it was found that no provision had been made for chaplains.

(b) I recommend the early authorization for the appointment of one chaplain for each of said regiments.

(c) In my order of the 19th of May, 1898, the commander of the military expedition dispatched to the Philippines was instructed to declare that we came not to make war upon the people of that country, "nor upon any party or faction among them, but to protect them in their homes, in their employments, and in their personal and religious rights."

(d) On the 21st of December, after the treaty was signed, the commander of the forces of occupation was instructed "to announce and proclaim in the most public manner that we come, not as invaders and conquerors, but as friends to protect the natives in their homes, in their employments, and in their personal and religious rights."

(e) Religious freedom is sacredly assured and enjoyed.

²⁴¹ We shall continue, as we have begun, to open the schools and the churches, to set the courts in operation, to foster industry and trade and agriculture, and in every way in our power to make these people whom Providence has brought within our jurisdiction feel that it is their liberty and not our power, their welfare and not our gain, we are seeking to enhance. [RE: the Philippines]

²⁴² A nation so preserved and blessed gives reverent thanks to God and invokes His guidance and the continuance of His care and favor.

²⁴³ (a) I regard as one of the essential factors of a durable adjustment the securing of adequate guarantees for liberty of faith, since insecurity of those natives who may embrace alien creeds is a scarcely less effectual assault upon the rights of foreign worship and teaching than would be the direct invasion thereof. [RE: the Chinese]

(b) Upon every division and branch of the government of the Philippines, therefore, must be imposed these inviolable rules: . . . that no law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, and that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship without discrimination or preference shall forever be allowed.

(c) That the provision of the Treaty of Paris pledging the United States to the protection of all rights of property in the islands, and as well the principle of our own Government which prohibits the taking of private property without due process of law, shall not be violated; . . . that no form of religion and no minister of religion shall be forced upon any community or upon any citizen of the islands; that, upon the other hand, no minister of religion shall be interfered with or molested in following his calling and that the separation between State and Church shall be real, entire, and absolute.

(d) As high and sacred an obligation rests upon the Government of the United States to give protection for property and life, civil and religious freedom, and wise, firm, and unselfish guidance in the paths of peace and prosperity to all the people of the Philippine Islands.

(e) I charge this Commission to labor for the full performance of this obligation, which concerns the honor and conscience of their country, in the firm hope that through their labors all the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands may come to look back with gratitude to the day when God gave victory to American arms at Manila and set their land under the sovereignty and the protection of the people of the United States.

²⁴⁴ (a) That there might be nothing lacking to complete the Judas-like infamy of his act, he took advantage of an occasion when the President was meeting the people generally; and advancing as if to take the hand out-stretched to him in kindly and brotherly fellowship, he turned the noble and generous confidence of the victim into an opportunity to strike the fatal blow.

(b) The wind is sowed by the men who preach such doctrines, and they cannot escape their share of responsibility for the whirlwind that is reaped. [NOTE: Hosea 8:7 - For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind; it hath no stalk; the bud shall yield no meal; if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up. (KJV)]

(c) Each man must work for himself, and unless he so works no outside help can avail him; but each man must remember also that he is indeed his brother's keeper, and that while no man who refuses to walk can be carried with advantage to himself or anyone else, yet that each at times stumbles or halts, that each at times needs to have the helping hand outstretched to him. [NOTE: Genesis 4:9 – And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?)KJV]

²⁴⁵ We need every honest and efficient immigrant fitted to become an American citizen, every immigrant who comes here to stay, who brings here a strong body, a stout heart, a good head, and a resolute purpose to do his duty well in every way and to bring up his children as law-abiding and God-fearing members of the community.

²⁴⁶ (a) At last the light was stilled in the kindly eyes and the breath went from the lips that even in mortal agony uttered no words save of forgiveness to his murderer, of love for his friends, and of faltering trust in the will of the Most High.

(b) If the hand of the Lord is heavy upon any country, if flood or drought comes, human wisdom is powerless to avert the calamity.

(c) In the midst of our affliction we reverently thank the Almighty that we are at peace with the nations of mankind; and we firmly intend that our policy shall be such as to continue unbroken these international relations of mutual respect and good will.

²⁴⁷ There must be no effort made to remove the mote from our brother's eye if we refuse to remove the beam from our own. [Note: Similar references are found in five verses of the King James Version including Matthew 7:5: "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."]

²⁴⁸ (a) No Christian and civilized community can afford to show a happy-go-lucky lack of concern for the youth of today; for, if so, the community will have to pay a terrible penalty of financial burden and social degradation in the tomorrow. [RE: child-labor laws and slum housing]

(b) If an American Jew or an American Christian misbehaves himself in Russia he can at once be driven out; but the ordinary American Jew, like the ordinary American Christian, would behave just about as he behaves here, that is, behave as any good citizen ought to behave; and where this is the case it is a wrong against which we are entitled to protest to refuse him his passport without regard to his conduct and character, merely on racial and religious grounds.

²⁴⁹ (a) No fellow-citizen of ours is entitled to any peculiar regard because of the way in which he worships his Maker, or because of the birthplace of himself or his parents, nor should he be in any way discriminated against therefor.

(b) We have plenty of sins of our own to war against, and under ordinary circumstances we can do more for the general uplifting of humanity by striving with heart and soul to put a stop to civic corruption, to brutal lawlessness and violent race prejudices here at home than by passing resolutions about wrongdoing elsewhere.

(c) Yet it is not to be expected that a people like ours, which in spite of certain very obvious shortcomings, nevertheless as a whole shows by its consistent practice its belief in the principles of civil and religious liberty and of orderly freedom, a people among whom even the worst crime, like the crime of lynching, is never more than sporadic, so that individuals and not classes are molested in their fundamental rights--it is inevitable that such a nation should desire eagerly to give expression to its horror on an occasion like that of the massacre of the Jews in Kishenev, or when it witnesses such systematic and long-extended cruelty and oppression as the cruelty and oppression of which the Armenians have been the victims, and which have won for them the indignant pity of the civilized world.

²⁵⁰ The Golden Rule should be, and as the world grows in morality it will be, the guiding rule of conduct among nations as among individuals; though the Golden Rule must not be construed, in fantastic manner, as forbidding the exercise of the police power. [NOTE: Many religious faiths express some version of the 'rule of reciprocity' in their sacred texts. For Christians, it is often referred to as the "Golden Rule." The language often referred to as the Golden Rule is located in the New Testament. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." Luke 6:31, [KJV]. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye

would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matthew 7:12, [KJV].

²⁵¹We cannot afford to consider whether he is Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile; whether he is Englishman or Irishman, Frenchman or German, Japanese, Italian, Scandinavian, Slav, or Magyar. [RE: immigrants]

²⁵²Against the wrath of the Lord the wisdom of man cannot avail; in time of flood or drought human ingenuity can but partially repair the disaster.

²⁵³Every Christian patriot in America needs to lift up his voice in loud and eternal protest against the mob spirit that is threatening the integrity of this Republic. [Quoting 'Bishop Galloway of Mississippi.']

²⁵⁴(a) Surely it should need no demonstration to show that willful sterility is, from the standpoint of the nation, from the standpoint of the human race, the one sin for which the penalty is national death, race death; a sin for which there is no atonement; a sin which is the more dreadful exactly in proportion as the men and women guilty thereof are in other respects, in character, and bodily and mental powers, those whom for the sake of the state it would be well to see the fathers and mothers of many healthy children, well brought up in homes made happy by their presence.

(b) Whether they are Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile; whether they come from England or Germany, Russia, Japan, or Italy, matters nothing. [RE: immigrants.]

²⁵⁵Declamation against militarism has no more serious place in an earnest and intelligent movement for righteousness in this country than declamation against the worship of Baal or Ashtaroth. [NOTE: Baal and Ashtaroth were pagan gods mentioned in a variety of places in the Bible. For example, Judges 2:13, "And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth." (KJV)]

²⁵⁶And we should be very jealous of this distinction which we have sought to earn. just now we should be particularly jealous of it because it is our dearest present hope that this character and reputation may presently, in God's providence, bring us an opportunity such as has seldom been vouchsafed any nation, the opportunity to counsel and obtain peace in the world and reconciliation and a healing settlement of many a matter that has cooled and interrupted the friendship of nations.

²⁵⁷(a) But when that has been done--as, God willing, it assuredly will be--we shall at last be free to do an unprecedented thing, and this is the time to avow our purpose to do it.

(b) The hand of God is laid upon the nations.

(c) He will show them favor, I devoutly believe, only if they rise to the clear heights of His own justice and mercy.

²⁵⁸(a) What we all thank God for with deepest gratitude is that our men went in force into the line of battle just at the critical moment when the whole fate of the world seemed to hang in the balance and threw their fresh strength into the ranks of freedom in time to turn the whole tide and sweep of the fateful struggle, - turn it once for all, so that thenceforth it was back, back, back for their enemies, always back, never again forward!

(b) The details of such a story can never be fully written, but we carry them at our hearts and thank God that we can say that we are the kinsmen of such.

²⁵⁹This foundation in the law, dealing with the modern conditions of social and economic life, would hasten the building of the temple of peace in industry which a rejoicing nation would acclaim. [RE: labor relations—"elemental rights, dealing with the relations of employer and employee."]

²⁶⁰Enlightenment must be accompanied by that moral power which is the product of the home and of religion.

²⁶¹(a) It believes that within these limitations, which are imposed not by the fiat of man but by the law of the Creator, self-government is just and wise. [RE: "Our country"]

(b) Living under it and supporting it the people have come into great possessions on the material and spiritual sides of life. [RE: "...a Government of freedom and equality, of justice and mercy, of education and charity."]

²⁶²(a) An enlarged freedom can only be secured by the application of the golden rule. [SEE fn 43b above]

(b) This means an opportunity to observe religion, secure education, and earn a living under a reign of law and order. [RE: efforts to bring "...more justice, more enlightenment, more happiness and prosperity into the home."]

(c) If they come at all, it will be because we have been willing to work in harmony with the abiding purpose of a Divine Providence. [RE: “the growth and improvement of the material and spiritual life of the Nation.”]

²⁶³ (a) To relieve the land of the burdens that came from the war, to release to the individual more of the fruits of his own industry, to increase his earning capacity and decrease his hours of labor, to enlarge the circle of his vision through good roads and better transportation, to place before him the opportunity for education both in science and in art, to leave him free to receive the inspiration of religion, all these are ideals which deliver him from the servitude of the body and exalt him to the service of the soul.

(b) Through this emancipation from the things that are material, we broaden our dominion over the things that are spiritual.

²⁶⁴ Our faith in man and God is the justification for the belief in our continuing success.

²⁶⁵ Our country has been provided with the resources with which it can enlarge its intellectual, moral, and spiritual life.

²⁶⁶ (a) In complying with that requirement I wish to emphasize that during the past year the Nation has continued to grow in strength; our people have advanced in comfort; we have gained in knowledge; the education of youth has been more widely spread; moral and spiritual forces have been maintained; peace has become more assured.

(b) The test of the rightfulness of our decisions must be whether we have sustained and advanced the ideals of the American people; self-government in its foundations of local government; justice whether to the individual or to the group; ordered liberty; freedom from domination; open opportunity and equality of opportunity; the initiative and individuality of our people; prosperity and the lessening of poverty; freedom of public opinion; education; advancement of knowledge; the growth of religious spirit; the tolerance of all faiths; the foundations of the home and the advancement of peace.

²⁶⁷ Substantial progress has been made during the year in national peace and security; the fundamental strength of the Nation’s economic life is unimpaired; education and scientific discovery have made advances; our country is more alive to its problems of moral and spiritual welfare

²⁶⁸ Ours must be a country of such stability and security as can not fail to carry forward and enlarge among all the people that abundant life of material and spiritual opportunity which it has represented among all nations since its beginning.

²⁶⁹ But I would emphasize again that social and economic solutions, as such, will not avail to satisfy the aspirations of the people unless they conform with the traditions of our race deeply grooved in their sentiments through a century and a half of struggle for ideals of life that are rooted in religion and fed from purely spiritual springs.

²⁷⁰ Such a national plan will, in a generation or two, return many times the money spent on it; more important, it will eliminate the use of inefficient tools, conserve and increase natural resources, prevent waste, and enable millions of our people to take better advantage of the opportunities which God has given our country. [RE: “carefully planned flood control, power development and land-use policies.”]

²⁷¹ In the face of these spiritual impulses we are sensible of the Divine Providence to which Nations turn now, as always, for guidance and fostering care.

²⁷² “By their fruits ye shall know them.” [Quoting from Matthew 7:20 (KJV)]

²⁷³ We have sought by every legitimate means to exert our moral influence against repression, against intolerance, against autocracy and in favor of freedom of expression, equality before the law, religious tolerance and popular rule.

(b) I volunteered to give myself to my Master—the cause of humane and brave living.

²⁷⁴ (a) Religion, by teaching man his relationship to God, gives the individual a sense of his own dignity and teaches him to respect himself by respecting his neighbors.

(b) An ordering of society which relegates religion, democracy and good faith among nations to the background can find no place within it for the ideals of the Prince of Peace.

(c) We have learned that God-fearing democracies of the world which observe the sanctity of treaties and good faith in their dealings with other nations cannot safely be indifferent to international lawlessness anywhere.

²⁷⁵ (a) Storms from abroad directly challenge three institutions indispensable to Americans, now as always. The first is religion.

(b) In a modern civilization, all three—religion, democracy and international good faith- complement and support each other.

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- (c) Where freedom of religion has been attacked, the attack has come from sources opposed to democracy.
- (d) Where democracy has been overthrown, the spirit of free worship has disappeared.
- (e) And where religion and democracy have vanished, good faith and reason in international affairs have given way to strident ambition and brute force.
- (f) The United States rejects such an ordering, and retains its ancient faith. [RE: relegating 'religion, democracy and god faith among nations to the background.']
- (g) There comes a time in the affairs of men when they must prepare to defend, not their homes alone, but the tenets of faith and humanity on which their churches, their governments and their very civilization are founded.
- (h) The defense of religion, of democracy and of good faith among nations is all the same fight.
- (i) To save one we must now make up our minds to save all. [RE: 'religion, democracy and good faith among nations.']
- (j) We, no more than other nations, can afford to be surrounded by the enemies of our faith and our humanity.
- (k) Dictatorship, however, involves costs which the American people will never pay: The cost of our spiritual values. . . The cost of freedom of religion.
- ²⁷⁶ We must look ahead and see the kind of lives our children would have to lead if a large part of the rest of the world were compelled to worship a god imposed by a military ruler, or were forbidden to worship God at all;
- ²⁷⁷ What we face is a set of world-wide forces of disintegration—vicious, ruthless, destructive of all the moral, religious and political standards which mankind, after centuries of struggle, has come to cherish most.
- ²⁷⁸ (a) Today, thank God, one hundred and thirty million Americans, in forty-eight States, have forgotten points of the compass in our national unity.
- (b) We must always be wary of those who with sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal preach the "ism" of appeasement. [RE: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." 1 Corinthians 13:1 (KJV)]
- (c) As men do not live by bread alone, they do not fight by armaments alone. [RE: 'But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Matthew 4:4 (KJV); 'And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.' Luke 4:4 (KJV)]
- (d) The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.
- (e) This nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women; and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God.
- ²⁷⁹ No realistic American can expect from a dictator's peace international generosity, or return of true independence, or world disarmament, or freedom of expression, or freedom of religion -or even good business.
- ²⁸⁰ (a) The world is too small to provide adequate "living room" for both Hitler and God.
- (b) In proof of that, the Nazis have now announced their plan for enforcing their new German, pagan religion all over the world—a plan by which the Holy Bible and the Cross of Mercy would be displaced by Mein Kampf and the swastika and the naked sword.
- (c) We are inspired by a faith that goes back through all the years to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis: "God created man in His own image."
- (d) We are fighting, as our fathers have fought, to uphold the doctrine that all men are equal in the sight of God.
- ²⁸¹ They know that victory for us means victory for religion. [RE: Japan, Italy and Germany]
- (b) Our own objectives are clear; the objective of smashing the militarism imposed by war lords upon their enslaved peoples; the objective of liberating the subjugated Nations; the objective of establishing and securing freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear everywhere in the world.
- (c) We on our side are striving to be true to that divine heritage.
- ²⁸² Bound together in solemn agreement that they themselves will not commit acts of aggression or conquest against any of their neighbors, the United Nations can and must remain united for the maintenance of peace by preventing any attempt to rearm in Germany, in Japan, in Italy, or in any other

Nation which seeks to violate the Tenth Commandment –“Thou shalt not covet.” [Referring, of course, to the Decalogue as found in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. (KJV)]

²⁸³ They [American soldiers] know, and we know, that it would be inconceivable—it would, indeed, be sacrilegious—if this Nation and the world did not attain some real, lasting good out of all these efforts and sufferings and bloodshed and death.

²⁸⁴ Each and every one of us has a solemn obligation under God to serve this Nation in its most critical hour—to keep this Nation great -- to make this Nation greater in a better world.

²⁸⁵ We pray that we may be worthy of the unlimited opportunities that God has given us.

²⁸⁶ There is an old and true saying that the Lord hates a quitter.

²⁸⁷ The plain people of this country found the courage and the strength, the self-discipline, and the mutual respect to fight and to win, with the help of our allies, under God.

²⁸⁸ We shall continue to strive to promote freedom of expression and freedom of religion throughout the peace-loving areas of the world.

²⁸⁹ We have recently witnessed in this country numerous attacks upon the constitutional rights of individual citizens as a result of racial and religious bigotry. [Truman went on to state that the will to fight these abuses must “be in the hearts of every one of us” and that the Federal Government must lead the way. He also discussed his creation of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights by Executive Order.]

²⁹⁰ (a) May the Lord strengthen us in our faith.

(b) May He give us wisdom to lead the peoples of the world in His ways of peace.

²⁹¹ This is the hour to rededicate ourselves to the faith in God that gives us confidence as we face the challenge of the years ahead.

²⁹² (a) Religious freedom, free speech, and freedom of thought are cherished realities in our land. [“Our first goal is to secure fully the essential human rights of our citizens.”]

(b) I again urge the Congress to pass suitable legislation at once so that this Nation may do its share in caring for the homeless and suffering refugees of all faiths.

²⁹³ (a) The basic source of our strength is spiritual.

(b) We believe that he [man] was created in the image of the Father of us all.

²⁹⁴ (a) In 1945, when I came down before the Congress for the first time on April 16, I quoted to you King Solomon’s prayer that he wanted wisdom and the ability to govern his people as they should be governed. [2 Chronicles 1:7-12 (KJV)]

(b) With that help from Almighty God which we have humbly acknowledged at every turning point in our national life, we shall be able to perform the great tasks which He now sets before us.

²⁹⁵ Now, I am confident that the Divine Power which has guided us to this time of fateful responsibility and glorious opportunity will not desert us now.

²⁹⁶ (a) Today, by the grace of God, we stand a free and prosperous nation with greater possibilities for the future than any people ever had before in the history of the world.

(b) They have enshrined for us, a principle of government, the moral imperative to do justice, and the divine command to men to love one another. [RE: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that he also love one another.” John 13:34 (KJV)]

(c) We seek to establish those material conditions of life in which, without exception, men may live in dignity, perform useful work, serve their communities, and worship God as they see fit.

²⁹⁷ The religious ideals which we profess, and the heritage of freedom which we have received from the past, clearly place that duty upon us. [RE: “...we should make every effort to extend the benefits of our democratic institutions to every citizen.”]

²⁹⁸ (a) We work for a better life for all, so that all men may put to good use the great gifts with which they have been endowed by their Creator.

(b) As we approach the halfway mark of the 20th century, we should ask for continued strength and guidance from that Almighty Power who has placed before us such great opportunities for the good of mankind in the years to come.

²⁹⁹ We will pursue this cause with determination and humility, asking divine guidance that in all we do we may follow the will of God.

³⁰⁰ It is also a homeland of the great religious beliefs shared by many of our citizens’ beliefs which are now threatened by the tide of atheistic communism. [RE: the defense of Europe]

³⁰¹ Let us go forward, trusting in the God of Peace, to win the goals we seek.

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- ³⁰² (a) On our side are all the great resources of freedom--the ideals of religion and democracy, the aspiration of people for a better life, and the industrial and technical power of a free civilization. [RE: to deter Communism]
- (b) We have the great responsibility of saving the basic moral and spiritual values of our civilization. [RE: reasons to fight 'for peace.']
- (c) In those areas minorities are being oppressed, human rights violated, religions persecuted. [RE: behind the Iron Curtain]
- ³⁰³ (a) We did not seek this struggle, God forbid.
- (b) May God bless our country and our cause.
- ³⁰⁴ For our part, we in this Republic were, and are, free men, heirs of the American Revolution, dedicated to the truths of our Declaration of Independence: "... That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights..."
- ³⁰⁵ So long as action and aspiration humbly and earnestly seek favor in the sight of the Almighty, there is no end to America's forward road; there is no obstacle on it she will not surmount in her march toward a lasting peace in a free and prosperous world.
- ³⁰⁶ (a) Either man is the creature whom the Psalmist described as "a little lower than the angels," crowned with glory and honor, holding "dominion over the works" of his Creator; or man is a soulless, animated machine to be enslaved, used and consumed by the state for its own glorification. [RE: Psalms 8: 5-6 (KJV)]
- (b) In them [American soldiers] I saw, too, a devout America, humble before God.
- ³⁰⁷ Every citizen wants to give full expression to his God-given talents and abilities and to have the recognition and respect accorded under our religious and political traditions. [RE: the "third great purpose of our government"]
- ³⁰⁸ At the outset, I believe it would be well to remind ourselves of this great fundamental in our national life: our common belief that every human being is divinely endowed with dignity and worth and inalienable rights.
- ³⁰⁹ The State of the Union today demonstrates what can be accomplished under God by a free people; by their vision, their understanding of national problems, their initiative, their self-reliance, their capacity for work--and by their willingness to sacrifice whenever sacrifice is needed.
- ³¹⁰ (a) Good education is the outgrowth of good homes, good communities, good churches, and good schools.
- (b) We must strive to have every person judged and measured by what he is, rather than by his color, race or religion.
- ³¹¹ (a) The opening of this new year must arouse in us all grateful thanks to a kind Providence whose protection has been ever present and whose bounty has been manifold and abundant.
- (b) Progress, however, will be realized only as it is more than matched by a continuing growth in the spiritual strength of the nation.
- ³¹² (a) Proclaimed in the Constitution of the Nation and in many of our historic documents, and rounded in devout religious convictions, these principles enunciate: A vigilant regard for human liberty. A wise concern for human welfare. A ceaseless effort for human progress.
- (b) It [the American economy] is fortunate in its wealth of educational and cultural and religious centers.
- (c) When our forefathers prepared the immortal document that proclaimed our independence, they asserted that every individual is endowed by his Creator with certain inalienable rights.
- (d) The purpose is Divine; the implementation is human. [RE: American commitment to the concepts embodied in the Declaration of Independence]
- (e) And it is still true that the great concept of the dignity of all men, alike created in the image of the Almighty, has been the compass by which we have tried and are trying to steer our course.
- ³¹³ Mankind then will see more clearly than ever that the future belongs, not to the concept of the regimented atheistic state, but to the people--the God-fearing, peace-loving people of all the world.
- ³¹⁴ (a) Can Government based upon liberty and the God-given rights of man, permanently endure when ceaselessly challenged by a dictatorship, hostile to our mode of life, and controlling an economic and military power of great and growing strength?
- (b) If we make ourselves worthy of America's ideals, if we do not forget that our nation was founded on the premise that all men are creatures of God's making, the world will come to know that it is free men who carry forward the true promise of human progress and dignity.

³¹⁵ The steady purpose of our society is to assure justice, before God, for every individual.

³¹⁶ (a) Her [America] miraculous progress and achievements flow from other qualities far more worthy and substantial . . . adherence to principles and methods consonant with our religious philosophy. . .

(b) So dedicated, and with faith in the Almighty, humanity shall one day achieve the unity in freedom to which all men have aspired from the dawn of time.

³¹⁷ In the words of a great President, whose birthday we honor today, closing his final State of the Union Message sixteen years ago, "We pray that we may be worthy of the unlimited opportunities that God has given us." [Quoting FDR]

³¹⁸ And in this high endeavor, may God watch over the United States of America. [Re: "...the role of being the great defender of freedom in its hour of maximum danger."]

³¹⁹ With thanks to Almighty God for seeing us through a perilous passage, we ask His help anew in guiding the "Good Ship Union."

³²⁰ (a) Our Nation was created to help strike away the chains of ignorance and misery and tyranny wherever they keep man less than God means him to be.

(b) So it shall always be, while God is willing, and we are strong enough to keep the faith. [RE: "This, then, is the state of the Union: Free and restless, growing and full of hope."]

³²¹ Scarred by the weaknesses of man, with whatever guidance God may offer us, we must nevertheless and alone with our mortality, strive to ennoble the life of man on earth.

³²² We know that "man is born unto trouble." [Quoting from Job 5:7 (KJV)]

³²³ And let us give thanks to the One who governs us all.

³²⁴ (a) If a basis for peace talks can be established on the San Antonio foundations--and it is my hope and my prayer that they can--we would consult with our allies and with the other side to see if a complete cessation of hostilities--a really true cease-fire--could be made the first order of business.

(b) I have just recently returned from a very fruitful visit and talks with His Holiness the Pope and I share his hope--as he expressed it earlier today--that both sides will extend themselves in an effort to bring an end to the war in Vietnam.

³²⁵ May God give us the wisdom, the strength and, above all, the idealism to be worthy of that challenge, so that America can fulfill its destiny of being the world's best hope for liberty, for opportunity, for progress and peace for all peoples.

³²⁶ In tribute to one of the most magnificent Americans of all time, I respectfully ask that all those here will rise in silent prayer for Senator Russell.

³²⁷ But my colleagues, this I believe: With the help of God, who has blessed this land so richly, with the cooperation of the Congress, and with the support of the American people, we can and we will make the year 1974 a year of unprecedented progress toward our goal of building a structure of lasting peace in the world and a new prosperity without war in the United States of America.

³²⁸ (a) In man's long, upward march from savagery and slavery--throughout the nearly 2,000 years of the Christian calendar, the nearly 6,000 years of Jewish reckoning--there have been many deep, terrifying valleys, but also many bright and towering peaks.

(b) "In God We Trust." Let us engrave it now in each of our hearts as we begin our Bicentennial.

³²⁹ (a) President Eisenhower was raised in a poor but religious home in the heart of America.

(b) And Lincoln in turn evoked the silent image of George Washington kneeling in prayer at Valley Forge.

³³⁰ (a) This often results in difficulty and delay, as I well know, but it also places supreme authority under God, beyond any one person, any one branch, any majority great or small, or any one party.

(b) My fellow Americans, I once asked you for your prayers, and now I give you mine: May God guide this wonderful country, its people, and those they have chosen to lead them.

(c) God bless you.

³³¹ (a) I asked for your prayers and went to work.

(b) May our third century be illuminated by liberty and blessed with brotherhood, so that we and all who come after us may be the humble servants of thy peace. Amen.

³³² And if we act in that knowledge and in that spirit, together, as the Bible says, we can move mountains. [RE: "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." I Corinthians 13:2 (NIV)]

³³³ The Moslem world is especially and justifiably outraged by this aggression against an Islamic people.

³³⁴ We respect the faith of Islam, and we are ready to cooperate with all Moslem countries.

³³⁵ Also at this moment, massive Soviet troops are attempting to subjugate the fiercely independent and deeply religious people of Afghanistan.

³³⁶ This attempt to subjugate an independent, non-aligned Islamic people is a callous violation of international law and the United Nations Charter, two fundamentals of international order.

³³⁷ (a) In the face of a climate of falsehood and misinformation, we've promised the world a season of truth—the truth of our great civilized ideas: individual liberty, representative government, the rule of law under God.

(b) He caught sight of our flag, saluted it, said, "God bless America," and then thanked us for bringing him home. [RE: Jeremiah Denton, former POW]

(c) God bless you, and thank you.

³³⁸ Well, I urge all peace-loving peoples to join together on those days, to raise their voices, to speak and pray for freedom. [RE: "a day of solidarity with the people of Poland" and "an international day of support for Afghanistan"]

³³⁹ (a) God should never have been expelled from America's classrooms in the first place.

(b) Thank you, and God bless you.

³⁴⁰ In 1983 we seek four major education goals: a quality education initiative to encourage a substantial upgrading of math and science instruction through block grants to the States; establishment of education savings accounts that will give middle and lower-income families an incentive to save for their children's college education and, at the same time, encourage a real increase in savings for economic growth; passage of tuition tax credits for parents who want to send their children to private or religiously affiliated schools; a constitutional amendment to permit voluntary school prayer.

³⁴¹ (a) I hope and pray the bipartisan spirit that guided you in this endeavor will inspire all of us as we face the challenges of the year ahead.

(b) America's leadership in the world came to us because of our own strength and because of the values which guide us as a society: free elections, a free press, freedom of religious choice, free trade unions, and above all, freedom for the individual and rejection of the arbitrary power of the state.

³⁴² (a) For a time we forgot the American dream isn't one of making government bigger; it's keeping faith with the mighty spirit of free people under God.

(b) Send away the handwringers and the doubting Thomases. [Referring to a common characterization of the skepticism of the disciple Thomas found in John 20: 25-28 (KJV)]

(c) Can we love America and not reach out to tell them: You are not forgotten; we will not rest until each of you can reach as high as your God-given talents will take you.

(d) And while I'm on this subject, each day your Members observe a 200-year-old tradition meant to signify America is one nation under God.

(e) America was founded by people who believed that God was their rock of safety.

(f) He [God] is ours [rock of safety]

(g) I recognize we must be cautious in claiming that God is on our side, but I think it's all right to keep asking if we're on His side.

(h) Carl Sandburg said, "I see America not in the setting sun of a black night of despair . . . I see America in the crimson light of a rising sun fresh from the burning, creative hand of God... I see great days ahead for men and women of will and vision."

(i) God bless you, and God bless America.

³⁴³ I must ask: If you can begin your day with a member of the clergy standing right here leading you in prayer, then why can't freedom to acknowledge God be enjoyed again by children in every schoolroom across this land?

³⁴⁴ There was a hunger in the land for a spiritual revival; if you will, a crusade for renewal.

³⁴⁵ (a) Our progress began not in Washington, DC, but in the hearts of our families, communities, workplaces, and voluntary groups which, together, are unleashing the invincible spirit of one great nation under God.

(b) And tonight, we declare anew to our fellow citizens of the world: Freedom is not the sole prerogative of a chosen few; it is the universal right of all God's children.

(c) Thank you, and God bless you.

³⁴⁶ (a) I thank the Congress for passing equal access legislation giving religious groups the same right to use classrooms after school that other groups enjoy.

(b) But no citizen need tremble, nor the world shudder, if a child stands in a classroom and breathes a prayer.

(c) The Sandinista dictatorship of Nicaragua, with full Cuban-Soviet bloc support, not only persecutes its people, the church, and denies a free press, but arms and provides bases for Communist terrorists attacking neighboring states. [RE: American support for 'freedom fighters']

³⁴⁷ We see signs of renewal in increased attendance in places of worship; renewed optimism and faith in our future; love of country rediscovered by our young, who are leading the way.

³⁴⁸ (a) The American people brought us back with quiet courage and common sense, with undying faith that in this nation under God the future will be ours; for the future belongs to the free.

(b) With God as your composer, Tyrone, your music will be the music of angels. {Referring to 12-year-old Tyrone Ford, a guest in the gallery}

(c) God bless you, and God bless America.

³⁴⁹ (a) We must continue the advance by supporting discipline in our schools, vouchers that give parents freedom of choice; and we must give back to our children their lost right to acknowledge God in their classrooms.

(b) America will never be whole as long as the right to life granted by our Creator is denied to the unborn.

(c) And we can enlarge the family of free nations if we will defend the unalienable rights of all God's children to follow their dreams.

(d) To those imprisoned in regimes held captive, to those beaten for daring to fight for freedom and democracy—for their right to worship, to speak, to live, and to prosper in the family of free nations—we say to you tonight: You are not alone, freedom fighters.

³⁵⁰ Well, today physicists peering into the infinitely small realms of subatomic particles find reaffirmations of religious faith.

³⁵¹ God bless you, and God bless America.

³⁵² (a) Communist Nicaragua is the odd man out—suppressing the church, the press, and democratic dissent and promoting subversion in the region.

(b) Finally, let's stop suppressing the spiritual core of our national being.

(c) Our nation could not have been conceived without divine help.

(d) Why is it that we can build a nation with our prayers, but we can't use a schoolroom for voluntary prayer?

(e) The 100th Congress of the United States should be remembered as the one that ended the expulsion of God from America's classrooms.

³⁵³ (a) It [the United States Constitution] grew out of the most fundamental inspiration of our existence: that we are here to serve Him by living free—that living free releases in us the noblest of impulses and the best of our abilities; that we would use these gifts for good and generous purposes and would secure them not just for ourselves and for our children but for all mankind.

(b) We the people—those are the warmhearted whose numbers we can't begin to count, who'll begin the day with a little prayer for hostages they will never know and MIA families they will never meet.

³⁵⁴ (a) Well, these ideas were part of a larger notion, a vision, if you will, of America herself—an America not only rich in opportunity for the individual but an America, too, of strong families and vibrant neighborhoods; an America whose divergent but harmonizing communities were a reflection of a deeper community of values: the value of work, of family, of religion, and of the love of freedom that God places in each of us and whose defense He has entrusted in a special way to this nation.

(b) We can be proud that for them and for us, as those lights along the Potomac are still seen this night signaling as they have for nearly two centuries and as we pray God they always will, that another generation of Americans has protected and passed on lovingly this place called America, this shining city on a hill, this government of, by, and for the people.

(c) Thank you, and God bless you.

³⁵⁵ (a) Our Judeo-Christian tradition recognizes the right of taking a life in self-defense. [RE: an exception in a 'human life amendment . . . where the unborn child threatens the life of the mother.']

(b) I believe Congress should pass our school prayer amendment.

³⁵⁶ (a) And let me add here: So many of our greatest statesmen have reminded us that spiritual values alone are essential to our nation's health and vigor.

(b) The Congress opens its proceedings each day, as does the Supreme Court, with an acknowledgment of the Supreme Being.

(c) Yet we are denied the right to set aside in our schools a moment each day for those who wish to pray.

(d) We can be proud that for them and for us, as those lights along the Potomac are still seen this night signaling as they have for nearly two centuries and as we pray God they always will, that another generation of Americans has protected and passed on lovingly this place called America, this shining city on a hill, this government of, by, and for the people.

³⁵⁷ (a) And I'll work to make them strong, for as Benjamin Franklin said: "If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, can a great nation rise without His aid?"

(b) God bless you, and God bless America.

³⁵⁸ It is my strongly held conviction that when people are given the chance they inevitably will choose a free press, freedom of worship, and certifiably free and fair elections. [RE: America should stand for "self-determination and democracy in Central America, including in Nicaragua."]

³⁵⁹ I believe that family and faith represent the moral compass of the Nation.

³⁶⁰ (a) And all kids are unique, and yet all kids are alike—the budding young environmentalists I met this month who joined me in exploring the Florida Everglades; the little leaguers I played catch with in Poland, ready to go from Warsaw to the World Series; and even the kids who are ill or alone—and God bless those boarder babies, born addicted to drugs and AIDS and coping with problems no child should have to face.

(b) Tell them [children] we are one nation under God.

(c) God bless all of you, and may God bless this great nation, the United States of America.

³⁶¹ He [a worker at a Czech factory] begins his speech to his fellow citizens with these words, words of a distant revolution: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, and that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

³⁶² May God bless the United States of America.

³⁶³ (a) For in the past 12 months, the world has known changes of almost Biblical proportions.

(b) But the biggest thing that has happened in the world in my life, in our lives, is this: By the grace of God, America won the cold war.

(c) I'll tell you, those of you who say, "Oh, no, someone who's comfortable may benefit from that," you kind of remind me of the old definition of the Puritan who couldn't sleep at night, worrying that somehow, someone somewhere was out having a good time.

(d) God bless you, and God bless our beloved country.

³⁶⁴ God bless America.

³⁶⁵ (a) And thank you, Jim Brady, for being here, and God bless you, sir.

(b) With your help, and God's help, it will be.

(c) Thank you, and God bless America.

³⁶⁶ (a) Tonight he's smiling down on us for the first time from the Lord's gallery. [RE: Tip O'Neill]

(b) We can't renew our country unless more of us—I mean, all of us—are willing to join the churches and the other good citizens, people like all the ministers I've worked with over the years or the priests and the nuns I met at Our Lady of Help in east Los Angeles or my good friend Tony Campollo in Philadelphia, unless we're willing to work with people like that, people who are saving kids, adopting schools, making streets safer.

³⁶⁷ (a) We all gain when we give, and we reap what we sow. [RE: There are numerous references in the Bible including Galatians 6:7 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' (KJV)]

(b) Responsibility, opportunity, and citizenship, more than stale chapters in some remote civic book, they're still the virtue by which we can fulfill ourselves and reach our God-given potential and be like them and also to fulfill the eternal promise of this country, the enduring dream from that first and most sacred covenant.

(c) Thank you, and God bless you all.

³⁶⁸ But it's grounded in a very, very old idea, that all Americans have not just a right but a solemn responsibility to rise as far as their God-given talents and determination can take them and to give something back to their communities and their country in return. [RE: Clinton's new 'social compact' which he labeled the 'New Covenant.']

³⁶⁹ (a) Over 200 years ago, our Founders changed the entire course of human history by joining together to create a new country based on a single powerful idea: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men

are created equal, . . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, and among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

(b) And I would like to say a special word to our religious leaders.

(c) You know, I'm proud of the fact the United States has more houses of worship per capita than any country in the world.

(d) These people who lead our houses of worship can ignite their congregations to carry their faith into action, can reach out to all of our children, to all of the people in distress, to those who have been savaged by the breakdown of all we hold dear.

(e) Because so much of what must be done must come from the inside out and our religious leaders and their congregations can make all the difference, they have a role in the New Covenant as well.

(f) The next two folks I've had the honor of meeting and getting to know a little bit, the Reverend John and the Reverend Diana Cherry of the AME Zion Church in Temple Hills, Maryland. . . And the special focus of their ministry is keeping families together.

(g) I visited their church once, and I learned they were building a new sanctuary closer to the Washington, DC, line in a higher crime, higher drug rate area because they thought it was part of their ministry to change the lives of the people who needed them.

(h) The second thing I want to say is that once Reverend Cherry was at a meeting at the White House with some other religious leaders, and he left early to go back to this church to minister to 150 couples that he had brought back to his church from all over America to convince them to come back together, to save their marriages, and to raise their kids.

(i) I believe every person in this country still believes that we are created equal and given by our Creator the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

³⁷⁰ (a) So all of us, not just as parents but all of us in our other roles—our media, our schools, our teachers, our communities, our churches and synagogues, our businesses, our governments—all of us have a responsibility to help our children to make it and to make the most of their lives and their God-given capacities.

(b) God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

³⁷¹ Think of them: terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, drug trafficking, ethnic and religious hatred, aggression by rogue states, environmental degradation. [RE: the 'threats we face today as Americans' that must be addressed.]

³⁷² (a) I applaud the work of religious groups and others who care for the poor.

(b) But I am confident: When Americans work together in their homes, their schools, their churches, their synagogues, their civic groups, their workplace, they can meet any challenge.

³⁷³ (a) Just a few days before my second Inauguration, one of our country's best known pastors, Reverend Robert Schuller, suggested that I read Isaiah 58:12.

(b) Here's what it says: "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in."

(c) I placed my hand on that verse when I took the oath of office, on behalf of all Americans, for no matter what our differences in our faiths, our backgrounds, our politics, we must all be repairers of the breach.

(d) Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

³⁷⁴ (a) I challenge every religious congregation, every community nonprofit, every business to hire someone off welfare.

(b) We still see evidence of abiding bigotry and intolerance in ugly words and awful violence, in burned churches and bombed buildings. [Clinton went on to say "We must fight against this, in our country and in our hearts."]

³⁷⁵ All over the world, people are being torn asunder by racial, ethnic, and religious conflicts that fuel fanaticism and terror

³⁷⁶ God bless you, and God bless the United States.

³⁷⁷ And we must ratify the ethical consensus of the scientific and religious communities and ban the cloning of human beings.

³⁷⁸ My fellow Americans, this is our moment. Let us lift our eyes as one Nation, and from the mountaintop of this American Century, look ahead to the next one, asking God's blessing on our endeavors and on our beloved country.

³⁷⁹ (a) And we will become at last what our Founders pledged us to be so long ago: One Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

(b) Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

³⁸⁰ (a) We should be proud of our role in bringing the Middle East closer to a lasting peace, building peace in Northern Ireland, working for peace in East Timor and Africa, promoting reconciliation between Greece and Turkey and in Cyprus, working to defuse these crises between India and Pakistan, in defending human rights and religious freedom.

(b) That's what the Pope and other religious leaders have urged us to do. [RE: "...reduce the debts of the poorest countries."]

(c) Second, we should support Americans who tithe and contribute to charities but don't earn enough to claim a tax deduction for it.

³⁸¹ Modern science has confirmed what ancient faiths have always taught: the most important fact of life is our common humanity.

³⁸² Good night, and God bless.

³⁸³ Government should not fund religious activities. [RE: Bush proposal to allow "...all taxpayers, whether they itemize or not, to deduct their charitable contributions."]

³⁸⁴ Our prayers tonight are with one of your own who is engaged in his own fight against cancer, a fine Representative, and a good man, Congressman Joe Moakley.

³⁸⁵ (a) If anyone doubts this, let them look to Afghanistan, where the Islamic "street" greeted the fall of tyranny with song and celebration.

(b) Let the skeptics look to Islam's own rich history, with its centuries of learning and tolerance and progress.

(c) America will take the side of brave men and women who advocate these values around the world, including the Islamic world, because we have a greater objective than eliminating threats and containing resentment.

(d) And many have discovered again that even in tragedy--especially in tragedy--God is near.

(e) May God bless.

³⁸⁶ But America will always stand firm for the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance.

³⁸⁷ (a) Yet there's power, wonder- working power, in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people. [RE: Similar to the words of the hymn "Power in the Blood" written by Lewis E. Jones in 1899.]

(b) The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity.

(c) We do not know--we do not claim to know all the ways of providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life and all of history.

(d) May He guide us now.

(e) And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

³⁸⁸ (a) I urge you to pass both my Faith-Based Initiative and the Citizen Service Act, to encourage acts of compassion that can transform America, one heart and one soul at a time.

(b) A man in the program said, "God does miracles in people's lives, and you never think it could be you."

³⁸⁹ One of them is found at the Healing Place Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. [RE: "...recovery programs that do amazing work."]

³⁹⁰ (a) I believe that God has planted in every human heart the desire to live in freedom.

(b) May God continue to bless America.

³⁹¹ (a) The same moral tradition that defines marriage also teaches that each individual has dignity and value in God's sight.

(b) It's also important to strengthen our communities by unleashing the compassion of America's religious institutions.

(c) Religious charities of every creed are doing some of the most vital work in our country: mentoring children, feeding the hungry, taking the hand of the lonely.

(d) Yet Government has often denied social service grants and contracts to these groups, just because they have a cross or a Star of David or a crescent on the wall.

(e) By Executive order, I have opened billions of dollars in grant money to competition that includes faith-based charities.

(f) Tonight I ask you to codify this into law, so people of faith can know that the law will never discriminate against them again.

(g) So tonight I propose a 4-year, \$300 million prisoner reentry initiative to expand job training and placement services, to provide transitional housing, and to help newly released prisoners get mentoring, including from faith-based groups.

³⁹² (a) Yet it is mistaken and condescending to assume that whole cultures and great religions are incompatible with liberty and self-government.

(b) The values we try to live by never change, and they are instilled in us by fundamental institutions such as families and schools and religious congregations.

(c) We can trust in that greater power who guides the unfolding of the years.

(d) And in all that is to come, we can know that His purposes are just and true.

³⁹³ Thank you, and may God bless America.

³⁹⁴ The road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable - yet we know where it leads: It leads to freedom.

³⁹⁵ (a) And one of the main sources of reaction and opposition is radical Islam - the perversion by a few of a noble faith into an ideology of terror and death.

(b) We show compassion abroad because Americans believe in the God-given dignity and worth of a villager with HIV/AIDS or an infant with malaria or a refugee fleeing genocide or a young girl sold into slavery.

(c) May God bless America.

³⁹⁶ Human life is a gift from our Creator, and that gift should never be discarded, devalued, or put up for sale.

³⁹⁷ (a) The same is true of Iran, a nation now held hostage by a small clerical elite that is isolating and repressing its people.

(b) We will also lead a nationwide effort, working closely with African American churches and faith-based groups, to deliver rapid HIV tests to millions, end the stigma of AIDS, and come closer to the day when there are no new infections in America.

³⁹⁸ (a) Two Members of the House and Senate are not with us tonight, and we pray for the recovery and speedy return of Senator Tim Johnson and Congressman Charlie Norwood.

(b) With the other members of the Quartet--the U.N., the EU, and Russia—we're pursuing diplomacy to help bring peace to the Holy Land and pursuing the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

(c) Thank you for your prayers.

³⁹⁹ God bless America.

⁴⁰⁰ (a) Thanks to the DC Opportunity Scholarships you approved, more than 2,600 of the poorest children in our Nation's Capital have found new hope at a faith-based or other non-public school.

(b) And to help guarantee equal treatment of faith-based organizations when they compete for Federal funds, I ask you to permanently extend charitable choice.

⁴⁰¹ Faith-based groups are bringing hope to pockets of despair, with newfound support from the Federal Government.

⁴⁰² God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.