ABSTRACT

RELIGION, CIVIL RELIGION, AND THE PRESIDENCY:
EXISTENCE AND USES OF AMERICA’S COMMON THREAD

by Steven Gordon Ellis

This paper attempts to describe the religious and civil religious discourse used by presidents during their inaugural addresses and State of the Union speeches, overlooked in the literature. This deductive, plausibility probe categorizes different words into different categories. It begins by offering definitions of religion and civil religion, separating interested words into either religious or civil religious categories, and then further attempts to subcategorize relevant words into groups that may explain a possible usage for their choice in the speech. From these subcategories, possible hypotheses were developed for future research. From the study, results show that religious and civil religious discourse is used for several purposes (ties to history, links to a common heritage, creating a common belief, policy objectives). This paper also presents limitations with the study and directions for future research into political discourse regarding religious and civil religious usage.
Religion, Civil Religion, and the Presidency: Existence and Uses of America’s Common Thread

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Dedication

To God, the Almighty, the Maker, the Author of Liberty, the Providence, Allah, Him, etcetera, who, without His grace, none of this would have been possible.
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This work has been a long and arduous process spanning several schools and several professors. To begin, I would like to thank Dr. Ryan Barilleaux, who without his help and guidance this thesis would have never been possible. For his advice, assistance, and patience I will forever be grateful. In addition, I would also like to extend my gratitude for their time and patience to Professors John Forren and Augustus Jones for participating on my thesis committee.

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In conclusion, although much time and ardor was spent conducting this research, inaccuracies might exist that are of blame solely to the author.
Introduction

“Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God’s gift to humanity. We Americans have faith in ourselves, but not in ourselves alone. 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. May He guide us now. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.” Many have claimed that the current president, George W. Bush, has supersaturated his speeches, addresses, and comments with references to God and religion or that the American government has been hijacked by religious zealots, determined to erase the line between church and state established by the founding fathers themselves. However, references to God and religion have been prevalent in American political discourse from the very beginning of the union. George Washington uses countless references to a God in his first inaugural address. Many works claim that presidents have used religious wording and references to God. This statement, at least in the literature, has appeared to be fairly straightforward and not needing further study to prove. However, the question that befalls this statement is “why?” Why do presidents use religious discourse in speeches? This question is where many interesting answers may arise that further explain the intersection between religion and politics.

To be more specific, researchers must be able to explain potential uses of religious discourse in the political arena. Possibilities for the use of religious language can range between wanting


3 An assumption than many academics have made in the prevailing literature.
words and ideas to connect with a fairly religious country or wanting to manipulate a public into following what would be unpopular political views by disguising the views in a cloak of religiosity. This question of “why” arises when reading the current, yet sparse, literature on the uses of religion, particularly America’s civil religion, in American politics. Civil religion is the collection of America’s symbols, holidays, documents, monuments, dogmas, and emotions that function in the same fashion as religious symbols, holidays, documents, monuments, dogmas and emotions that lead to a common sense of history, utility, and purpose. Examples of American civil religious artifacts include, but are not limited to, the flag, the American bald eagle, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Washington Monument, Vietnam Memorial, plurality, diversity, god, and a civic sense of nationalism. These are identical to religious artifacts such as crosses, crucifixes, Easter, Christmas, the Bible, Mecca, Jerusalem, the Trinity, forgiveness, caring, God, and a religious sense of devotion to God. Both sets of symbols serve the same purpose: to help define a group of people; to form a single, functional unit; to allow a diverse population to draw roots back to common histories, goals, and actions to serve the higher power being invoked.

This is where most literature regarding civil religion has focused - normative answers to the existence and uses of civil religion. Thompson takes a very normative view of religion and politics and finds that religion cannot equal politics and politics cannot equal religion. He claims that “political goals have become infused with religious fervor.” Demerath III and Williams believe that civil religion has enabled Americans to define themselves politically and that this religious discourse is Christian in tone, but cleansed of the specifics. Some (Wimberly [1980],


Thomas and Flippen [1972]) have even tried to empirically study civil religion; however, there has been no study to actually, empirically prove that presidents use civil religion and why, if any reason, they would use such discourse. So, without ever actually looking at why politicians, particularly the president, the head of the American civil religious church\(^7\), uses civil religion, knowing what civil religion actually is serves no real purpose. An understanding of why presidents use civil religion gives political science a better breadth and depth to analyze and explain the relationship between politics and religion.

Therefore, this study attempts to serve three research purposes: (1) to attempt to find words, phrases, and references that would help others study civil religion more methodically; (2) to analyze the discourse of current American presidents to find types and frequencies of references to civil religious, or religious, language in speeches and addresses; and (3) beginning with an assumption that civil religious language is prevalent in presidential discourse, attempting to find trends or reasoning as to why such civil religious, or religious, language is used.

\(^7\) Thomas Langston. *With Reverence and Contempt: How Americans Think About the President.* (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1995).
Literature Review

The literature regarding civil religion is varied and complex with each particular author looking at the topic from their own scholastic perspectives. There appears to be several main themes regarding civil religious literature. In one theme, scholars focus upon the definition of civil religion, all attempting to describe what exactly civil religion is. In another, some have attempted to try to describe what makes up American civil religion and what it does. And finally, in yet another theme, scholars have attempted to empirically study civil religion.

The only appropriate place to begin an attempt to define civil religion is where almost all have begun and where the idea was first mentioned. Jean Jacques Rousseau was the first to use the term “civil religion” in his work *The Social Contract* (1762). According to Cristi, “Rousseau… refers to [civil religion as] a civic faith to be created and imposed by the sovereign as a way of promoting civic virtues and political unity.” Cristi continues showing that “Rousseau’s purpose was to design a religion that would elicit feelings of civic membership and enforce the duties of citizenship in national communities no longer bonded by traditional religious links.”

To further attempt to define civil religion, one of the great scholars on the topic, Robert Bellah defines civil religion as a “religious dimension found… in the life of every people, through which it interprets its historical experience in the light of transcendent reality.” Civil religion in America is the collection of political beliefs and historical experiences which people use to define themselves. Civil religion for Bellah was self-contained, separate from other


9 Cristi, 16.

religions, grounded in Christian imagery, meaning that was uniquely American, transcending denominational or religious difference, and was not dependant on particular churches, faiths, or political administrations. Civil religion is an understanding of America’s role in history and each person’s role in that history as a citizen. This differs from Rousseau’s view of civil religion in that Rousseau saw civil religion as a creation of the sovereign to bring citizens into the political reality of their times where Bellah viewed civil religion as a creation of the people.

Gehrig has taken other scholars’ definitions to attempt to describe and define civil religion. Gehrig uses Richey and Jones’ study to outline their five different, yet interrelated meanings of civil religion. Gehrig, through Richey and Jones, describes folk religion, religious nationalism, democratic faith, Protestant civic piety, and transcendent universal religion of the nation. Novak defines civil religion as a set of secular religious systems that constitute the American civilization.

Each different type of civil religion, as defined by Richey and Jones, has different sociologists and theologians’ works attempting to define these different branches of the same faith (Warner, 1961; Greeley, 1972; Marty, 1974; Dewey, 1934, Hudson, 1970; Niebur, 1959; etc.) Novak

11 Demerath and Williams

12 Demerath and Williams


16 Richey and Jones.
describes two types of civil religions. The first is the current civil religion. The second is the new civil religion that will incorporate other groups that have been excluded from civil religion (blacks, Jews, women, and other “minority” groups). However, even though there are many differences among all the different types of civil religion, each is one part of a greater civil religion that defines America. Therefore, many have defined, in a very basic manner, civil religion as a set of symbols or systems used to define a group of people or citizenry.

The same authors have attempted to describe what ideas or beliefs make up this civil religion, another theme of the literature. Thomas and Flippen describe two major themes that Bellah believes constitute civil religion. The first is the American Israel Theme: “There exists for the United States an obligation – collective and individual – to do God’s will on earth, to create a new social order that will be an example to all nations of the world.” The second theme is the Sacrifice theme: “It is periodically necessary for Americans to die a sacrificial death out of which is reborn a nation dedicated anew to its God-given obligations.”

Novak describes six main beliefs (or even paradoxes) of civil religion: movement ahead and stability, lover of law and lawlessness, dream and skepticism, equality of opportunity and inequality of status, guilt and hope, and America as number one while still being humble.

Others have attempted to show what civil religion is by showing what it is not. Gehrig (1981)

17 Novak, 128.

18 Novak, 129.

19 Novak.


21 Thomas and Flippen, 219.

22 Novak.
mentions that Coleman\textsuperscript{23} says that civil religion “perform[s] a differentiated function which is the unique province of neither church nor state.”\textsuperscript{24} Civil religion is not denominational religion nor is it polity. Each one of these three ideas has particular functions that, although some may overlap, neither of the other two can perform. Novak says civil religion is not a church religion, a lowest common denominator of beliefs, or the “American way of life.”\textsuperscript{25}

Another focus of civil religious literature is its development and evolvement. Bellah focuses on the three trials of civil religion: independence, slavery and equality, and the future. The first trial of civil religion tested our independence and “whether we should or could run our own affairs in our own way.”\textsuperscript{26} Bellah focuses on the words of the founding fathers and the first inaugural and farewell address of George Washington to show the uses of civil religion then. The second trial was with Lincoln, the Civil War, and slavery. Lincoln’s words echoed very religious language in describing not only the sacrifice needed to save the Union but also equality of all persons in the United States. This trial has come to test civil rights for all people, especially those who struggled in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The final trial is that of time, particularly what will happen with American civil religion as the world heads toward a new world order, something more global and more secular.\textsuperscript{27} Will American civil religion be abolished in a new global civil religion or would it be folded into the new faith? This is the next trial for American civil religion. Bellah also goes through the history of the United States and the involvement of civil religion during different periods of that history from the beginning Puritan days during


\textsuperscript{24} Gehrig, 54.

\textsuperscript{25} Novak, 127-128.

\textsuperscript{26} Bellah, \textit{Beyond Belief}, 183.

\textsuperscript{27} Bellah, \textit{Beyond Belief}. 
founding up to the 1970s.\textsuperscript{28}

Other scholars have focused upon the changing of the civil religion and its development. Novak believed that civil religion was dying in America in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century until John F. Kennedy won the presidency in 1960. Novak believes that Kennedy was able to breathe life back into civil religion by incorporating others into the faith that were usually excluded. Kennedy was attempting to bring black, Hispanics, Indians, Catholics, and other excluded groups into the civil religion and use the religion in similar ways as in the past to help these groups and their future. No longer was civil religion controlled by the previous priests and prophets of civil religion that left many groups without help; civil religion was now going to help all.\textsuperscript{29}

Demerath III and Williams believe that regardless of the uses or point of civil religion, the unified civil society which civil religion promotes is being broken down into smaller “civil societies” (race, gender, particular issue).\textsuperscript{30} In this belief, civil religion is not longer used as a national unifier for America’s diverse background; instead, particular groups with particular interests are using civil religion to break away from the national group to promote their own issues: “Civil religious discourse has become a tool for legitimizing social movements and interest group politics.”\textsuperscript{31}

Another focus into civil religious literature reveals the actual empirical studies of civil religion. Most literature has been more theoretical in its approach to civil religion than empirical. Even the empirical research involving civil religion does not look at how presidents have used civil religion. Most of the studies have looked at how civil religion affects presidential vote choice, not how many times, why, or when the president uses civil religion.


\textsuperscript{29} Novak.

\textsuperscript{30} Demerath and Williams
For example, Novak believes that civil religion does influence presidential vote choice and offers ideas on how this has changed and how different presidents have used civil religion; however, Novak offers no empirical data to prove his hypotheses.\textsuperscript{32} Wimberly did find a civil religious dimension against normal, denominational religions.\textsuperscript{33} However, neither one of these “studies” attempted to test civil religious influence against other factors nor figure out if civil religion actually did influence presidential vote choice, and, in the words of Wimberly, “Civil religion seems ready, if not overdue, for such analysis.”\textsuperscript{34}

Wimberly attempted to tackle the relationship between civil religion and other political influences in the 1972 presidential election. He found that civil religion did play a role in candidate choice in some samples and played a role when other factors were held constant. Wimberly also found that civil religion played a factor in deciding party, political belief, and political knowledge. Therefore, civil religion was found to be statistically significant in deciding vote choice.\textsuperscript{35} However, once again, there was no focus to show presidential use of civil religion, why, when, and how often.

Thomas and Flippen attempted to study civil religious language around Honor America Day in 1970 by analyzing the editorial pages of newspapers, both national and local. This qualitative

\textsuperscript{31} Demerath and Williams, 154.

\textsuperscript{32} Novak.


\textsuperscript{35} Wimberly, “Civil Religion and the Choice for President...”
study was an attempt to test Bellah’s vague hypotheses about civil religion being important in America. Thomas and Flippen were not able to find any discernable civil religion in their study of editorial pages.

Although not an empirical study, Demerath and Williams find evidence of civil religion in America’s political ceremonies, holidays, and political funerals. One can also find evidence of the existence of civil religion in presidential addresses, Supreme Court decisions, and legislative declarations.

The idea of civil religion is important to politicians, especially those of the president or any presidential contenders. Novak focuses on this religious role of the president and the importance of those running for the office in recognizing the power of civil religion and their importance as the leader of the civil religion in his work Choosing Presidents: Symbols of Political Leadership (1992). Novak understands the intersection between religion and polity in civil religion and the influence that the executive can use when he correctly uses this symbol of America. Novak says,

“A candidate for the presidency of the United States does well to recognize that he is running for a religious office. The national religion is, to be sure, quite pragmatic and quite secular. His concerns will be power, vested interests, money, job, and other utterly mundane affairs. Still, America conducts itself like a religion. A candidate had better understand that.”

The civil religion and use of it can be quite powerful in America. Novak believes that it is so powerful that candidates for the presidency are not running for political office, but rather for a religious office of the civil religion.

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36 Bellah, Beyond Belief.

37 Thomas and Flippen.

38 Demerath and Williams.

39 Novak, 108.
Demerath and Williams look at President Reagan’s uses of civil religion and its discourse. They found that the symbols used were more important than their substance. They also claim, although without a citation or proof, that even among 60% of the United States citizenry who do not regularly attend religious services, civil religious discourse is reassuring.\textsuperscript{40} This is also the problem with Fowler and Hertzke when they say that presidents use civil religion and its religious language, but offer no empirical studies to contend such a point. However, they do briefly discuss President Reagan and Clinton ending with different iterations of “God bless America,” Lincoln discussing that the United States is the world’s last, best hope, and Reagan’s Puritan “shining city on a hill” reference.\textsuperscript{41}

It appears as though there is a hole in theoretical and empirical studies in how often, why, and when presidents use civil religious language. Most scholars have focused upon different aspects of civil religion and its uses. Research must be done to show how often, why, and when presidents use civil religious language.

\textsuperscript{40} Demerath and Williams, 161.

Research Design

The goal of this study is an attempt to discover three main points. First, with no real empirical data as to whether or not presidents actually use religion and civil religion in speeches and the frequency of such references in speeches to the public, the first goal will be an attempt to find words, phrases, and references that are religious or civil religious by reference (being that they are an attempt to tie the listener back to America’s spirit, history, common heritage, etcetera). Secondly, without previous empirical work into civil research such as this, the next goal will be to see if such language can be grouped and the frequency of such references. Finally, beginning with the assumption that such references are used and frequently enough for study, this will be an attempt to categorize religious and civil religious references into reasons why such discourse was used by the particular president.

To look into civil religious discourse with the presidency, a deductive methodology will generally be employed to look for the existence of any religious or civil religious language and attempt to find trends or theories that could be teased out into testable hypotheses. Furthermore, this study is a plausibility probe into whether or not further empirical work should be done with religion, civil religion, and presidential discourse. Without any previous empirical works on the subject, the actuality of religious or civil religious discourse is unknown and generally assumed.

To actually study my three main goals, I will use rhetoric employed by President William Jefferson Clinton and President George W. Bush throughout their terms. I will focus upon addresses given to a national audience, particularly their State of the Union addresses and inaugural addresses (both terms). As for the selection of cases, these two presidents (William Jefferson Clinton and George W. Bush) offer many interesting comparisons and paradoxes for study. First, they both served (or will serve) two consecutive presidential terms. Also, both must appeal to the same basic religious base, while both must also appeal to different specific religious bases, President Clinton to the religious, liberal left and Bush to the religious, conservative right. Although similar civil religious techniques might be used, each president has a vastly different political ideology in American politics.
A form of content analysis will be used to analyze the selected documents. Particular key words include: God (and any iteration of God); religious references (good, evil, biblical references, etcetera); references to high civil religious holidays (Fourth of July, Memorial Day); any American, historical documents (Constitution, Declaration of Independence), monuments, past wars, pluralism, diversity, liberty, and others that will be discussed later as they are found (NOTE: A reasoning shall be presented for some keywords selected to offer an explanation and objectivity to a highly subjective methodology). Therefore, with an explanation, further dialogue may occur as to what actually encompasses civil religion and civil religious language, allowing later research a starting point for comparison.

To determine possibly uses why religious or civil religious language is used (if such language is actually used), categories have been constructed based from research and interviews held with presidential speech writers, particularly President Bush’s speech writer, Michael Gerson. According to an interview with Gerson, President Bush uses religious / civil religious language for five main reasons: (1) comfort in grief and morning, (2) historic influence of faith in America, (3) faith based welfare reform, (4) literary allusions to hymns and scriptures, and (5) references to Divine Providence. These categories offer a basic framework for categorization of religious references. The actual categories will be selected and created after tallying the results of the research as part of the deductive process.

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Results

The first goal of this study was to find words, phrases, and references that are religious or civil religious by reference. From the evidence presented, it appears as though certain words, phrases, and references can be teased out of the presidential inaugural and State of the Union speeches that can be classified as religious and/or civil religious. As for these words that are religious in nature, keywords, phrases, or references can be classified into two groups: general and specific faith references. General references are those religious words or phrases that are neutral to any specific faith, cover many, different faiths, or, as the category lists them as, are general religious terms. There were 133 of these general references which include the words: compassionate; [references to] congregations: churches, synagogues, religious groups, African American churches, faith based, religious charities, religious initiative, religious groups, and mosques; conscience; destiny; dignity; eternally right; evil; “evil is real and must be opposed;” faith; good; heavens; ministry; moral; religious; religious tolerance; reverence; “right from wrong;” sacred; and sacred responsibility. The list and the number of times used for each particular religious word or phrase can be found Appendix A.

The second religious group was those words or phrases used in the selected speeches that are specific to a particular faith or larger group of a faith (Catholic, Protestant, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish). There were 137 of these particular faith words found in the speeches by President Clinton and President Bush, and these words include: abstinence; “acts of God;” angels; “belief beyond measure;” [references to] Beatitudes; [references to] Bible (direct): Galatians 6:9, Isaiah 58:12; “captives set free;” charity; chosen; nation; creed; crusade; “culture of life;” “day of fire;” “dignity and value in God’s light;” eternal promise; “faith more powerful;” [references to] God: God, Almighty, image of Maker, Author of Liberty, Providence, Allah, His; God’s blessings; God-given: capabilities, talents, potential, gifts; God’s help; “God is near;” “God is not neutral;” God-send; “good and faithful servants;” grace; “great love;” “heard the trumpets;” “hope in hopeless;” “inherit the Earth;” “joyful mountaintop;” “just God;” just war; Koran; “larger than self;” “lift eyes to the mountaintop;” “longing of the soul;” “Lord’s Gallery;” miracles; New
Covenant; new land; Our Lady of Hope; “overcome evil with greater good;” [references to] particular faiths: Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, Muslim, “noble faith” (Islam), Star of David, Crescent, Christian; plague; prayer; promised land; quotes from religious leaders; reborn; [references to] religious leaders: Cardinal Bernadin, Pastors, church leaders, Reverends, ministers priests and nuns; “road to Jericho;” “rock in raging sea;” sacred covenant; sacred institution; sacrifice; saint; “seed upon the wind;” Sermon on the Mount; “service, mercy, and heart for the weak;” soul; truths of Sinai; “unjust encounter justice;” “What Congress has given let them not take away;” and “wonder working power.” The list and the number of times used for each particular religious word or phrase can be found Appendix A.

As for civil religious words, phrases, or references, several categories were created to compartmentalize the findings of the research. The first category for civil religious references is a category devoted to references to America’s government or governmental system. All these terms have a direct link to America’s system of government or terms which relate to the government. There were 174 of these references, which include the words: democracy; list of former presidents: “previous five presidents” [up to Clinton], Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, T. Roosevelt, Wilson, F.D. Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush (41), Clinton]; republic; self-government; sovereignty; voting / election; and [references to] Washington D.C.. The list and the number of times used for each particular civil religious word or phrase can be found Appendix B.

The next grouping of civil religious terms is references to America’s documents, monuments, and other treasures. These words and phrases are some of the most recognizable quotes from U.S. political documents, the documents themselves, and other treasures. There were 63 of these phrases observed, which includes the words: “We hold these truths... all are created equal;” Amendment; Bill of Rights; Constitution; Declaration of Independence; flag; Liberty Bell; “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;” “more perfect union;” National Parks / Treasures: Yellowstone, Everglades, Lake Tahoe, national parks, Utah’s red rocks, “national landmarks,” “national treasures;” Pledge of Allegiance; and the Star Spangled Banner. The list and the number of times used for each particular civil religious word or phrase can be found Appendix B.
The third category of civil religious references, and the largest list of words, was in regards to America’s past. These references range from phrases, wars, American icons, words about the past, and any events from the past, good or bad. There were 171 observed references to America’s past, words which include: 4th of July; Ancestors: Mayflower, slave ships, Ellis Island; civil rights; Civil War; cold war; depression; Francis Scott Key; Gulf War; Harriet Tubman; historic responsibility; Homestead Act; Iwo Jima; list of former presidents: “previous five presidents” [up to Clinton], Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, T. Roosevelt, Wilson, F.D. Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush (41), Clinton; Founders; immigrants / immigration; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Oklahoma City bombing; Pearl Harbor; Pennsylvania [September 11, 2001]; Pentagon; revolution; Rosa Parks; Rudolph Giuliani; “saved the union;” September 11, 2001; [references to] slavery; Thomas Edison; U.S.S. Cole; Vietnam; Virginia [September 11, 2001]; World Trade Center towers / New York [September 11, 2001]; and the world wars. The list and the number of times used for each particular civil religious word or phrase can be found Appendix B.

The fourth group of civil religious terms used by President Clinton and President Bush in their inaugural and State of the Union addresses is a group the researcher has termed “uniting” themes. These themes are an assortment of references that promote a single, united country. They include references to unity, themes or things the nation can rally around, or phrases that people generally rally behind as a single unit. There were 204 observed references to these “uniting” themes, references which included: “American spirit;” “beloved country;” “glory of America;” “God Bless America” [song]; “land we love;” “Made in the U.S.A.;” “One America” [and others]: one people, one common destiny, one nation, common culture, common identity, common ground, common good, one country; “single hand over a single heart;” [references to] soldiers; and war. The list and the number of times used for each particular civil religious word or phrase can be found Appendix B.

There was another group created in reference to policy preference civil religious references; however, this group will be discussed later.

The next to last group of civil religious reference found is a category termed “general principles.” These themes are abstract terms used by Americans to describe themselves, their
country, or situations the country faces. There were 570 observed references by the researcher, references which include: “American dream;” challenge; civic duty; civil society; courage; destiny; diversity; duty; English; equality / equal; fairness / fair; freedom / free; hard work; history / historic; independence; justice; law; liberty; opportunity; pluralism; possibility; prosperity; responsibility; rights; sacrifice; service / serve; tolerance; union; and united / unity. The list and the number of times used for each particular civil religious word or phrase can be found Appendix B.

The final category created for civil religious discourse in the selected speeches was and “other” group. This group, which only consists of three terms, is the category for references that were civil religious by nature, but did not fit into other categories. The three terms were 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia; “Freedom Now” (in reference to peaceful demonstrations); and “Voice of America” (in reference to America using the radio as a tool to promote American ideals in the Middle East). Each was only used once during all selected speeches.

General religious, specific faith religious, American governmental, American documents and monuments, America’s past, “uniting” themes, policy preference, “general principals,” and other were the categories created to explore goal one of this study, to find words, phrases, or references in presidential inaugural and State of the Union speeches that are religious or civil religious in nature. Fore mentioned references were categorized as well as possible into subgroups that further explain their meaning and illuminate the types of religious and civil religious discourse that can be used in official, presidential speeches.

Now that terms, words, and phrases have been identified and an attempt has been made to count and categorize the religious and civil religious references, the second focus of the study can be analyzed. Frequency of such references have been mentioned previously in this paper and can be found in Appendices A and B. If the reader can agree with at least some, if not all, of the references selected for study, one can establish that religious and civil religious references are used by at least President Clinton and President Bush in their inaugural and State of the Union speeches. Therefore, one can hypothesize that other past presidents have used religious and civil religious terms in their inaugural and State of the Union speeches. Therefore, the second goal of this study is at least nominally addressed and answered.
As for the final goal of this study, an attempt has been made to tease out reasoning for why such references were made. On a basic level, one reasoning for using religious and civil religious discourse in speeches, particularly major, televised, national addresses is exactly what the definition of civil religion is: Civil religion is the collection of America’s symbols, holidays, documents, monuments, dogmas, and emotions that function in the same fashion as religious symbols, holidays, documents, monuments, dogmas and emotions that lead to a common sense of history, utility, and purpose. If the goal is to unite a divided, diverse county to follow a common heritage, history, or goal, then using such discourse allows a president to do so. The ultimate goal of a state is unity, especially among a diverse population. Plato says in *The Republic*, ”Make sure that the city is neither small nor seemingly great, but sufficient and one.”\[^{43}\] Also, using such language can really help make a connection to the listener who will understand these terms on a personal level, making the point that much more powerful. Next, using such discourse during a speech can stress the importance of a particular point or policy preference. Which sounds more important and serious: “We should defend the U.S. with our troops wherever necessary,” or “Americans have a historic responsibility as courageous, hard working, God-fearing citizens to defend the United States, just as the ancient Israelites protected themselves from their enemies with Yahweh’s protection, with our men and women in uniform from the clutches of evil men, hell-bent on the destruction of the liberty, freedom, and prosperity that we, as one America, cherish?” The second phrase carries much more significance and seriousness than the first statement. Only religious and civil religious language can achieve such a goal and endpoint.

Finally, one last use for religious and civil religious discourse is for support of particular policy ideas or arguments. One last group made for the religious and civil religious references was for policy preferences. Such determinations were made by references made around the word in study or the words around the religious or civil religious reference described. Some of the determinations were direct (the president directly stated his intention: “We should increase defense spending for our brave and courageous soldiers” would be classified as defense spending) and others were inferred (the president indirectly states his intentions: “The act

committed is an act of war and our men and women in uniform will retaliate anywhere in the world needed to defend our country” would be classified as foreign policy). The following is a list of the different policy areas which the religious and civil religious terms could be grouped into from being mention or implied within a statement:

**Religious References:** AIDS, abstinence, addiction, campaign finance reform, children [child support, protection], education, faith based initiatives, foreign policy, gun control, health care, marriage, morality, natural disasters, service, smaller government, social security, stem-cell research, terrorism, taxes, war, and welfare reform.

The list and the number of times each particular religious word or phrase was used for each policy, numbers, and the president who used them can be found Appendix C.

**Civil Religious References:** AIDS, Americorps / Peacecorps / Freedomcorps, arts, balanced budget / deficit control, Base closures, campaign finance reform, censorship, crime, disabled, discrimination, domestic spending, economy / business, education / schools, environment, equal pay, faith based initiative, family support / relationships between families, finances, foreign policy, frivolous lawsuits, gun control, health care, helping children, “helping middle class,” Homeland Security, immigration, judicial nominations, marriage, Medicare, military / defense spending, minimum wage, morality, national parks [money for], poverty reduction, scientific funding, senior citizen support, service, smaller government, social security, taxes, trade, welfare, war, war on drugs, and Year 2000.

The list and the number of times each particular religious word or phrase was used for each policy, numbers, and the president who used them can be found Appendix D.

Tallies for each president, type of discourse, and final numbers for what the researcher found in his study are as follows. President Clinton used a found 93 religious references and 532 civil
religious references in his speeches. President Bush used a found 126 religious references and 586 civil religious references in his speeches. A breakdown of these numbers by type of speech and a final collection of numbers can be found in Appendix E.

This was an attempt to fulfill the last goal of this study, to try to find reasons why presidents would use religious and civil religious discourse. This may occur for personal connections, to make a phrase more important, or to draw attention to a particular policy issue. Therefore, all the goals of this study have been addressed in the research.
Analysis

With different religious and civil religious terms discovered, listed, categorized, and a reason used teased out, the question that still remains is “why?” Why would a president use religious and civil religious discourse in speeches? Some reasons have been given: unite a diverse country, create a personal connection with the citizenry, make a point appear more important or official and for a policy pitch. Other reasons also can be hypothesized, some of which that are more Machiavellian by nature. As Machiavelli has written, “Man are so simple and yield so readily to the desires of the moment that he who will trick will always find another who will suffer himself to be tricked.” This type of discourse could be used to trick or deceive people from other issues or manipulate the citizenry into following an ideal or proposal in which they would normally not profess a belief.

Of course, on a practical, political level, religious and civil religious discourse can be used by presidents to connect, grow, and please their particular constituency, especially religious discourse and President Bush. Some have claimed that President Bush has used religious discourse throughout all his speeches, not just inaugural and State of the Union addresses, to appeal to his religious, conservative core constituency. Such claims are possible and this research shows that perhaps he might. However, President Clinton used religious discourse as well; so, would President Clinton be attempting to reach out to the religious, liberal core constituency that was so prevalent during the civil rights era? Perhaps. Many presidents have probably used such discourse to connect their stances, beliefs, and words to their constituency.

However, the reasons why presidents use such discourse in speeches cannot be fully understood without talking to the presidents themselves. All the reasons presented could possibly be the reasons why President Clinton and President Bush use religious and civil religious discourse in their inaugural and State of the Union speeches. However, one cannot be

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fully sure. It might be possible that President Clinton and President Bush solely use the religious and civil religious discourse because previous presidents have used such language in their own speeches. This would of course lead to the question as to why George Washington, the first president so therefore the first president to use religious and civil religious discourse in speeches, used such language? Such reasons for the actual use of religious and civil religious words, phrases, and references would require serious, honest conversation with presidents, their staffs, and their speech writers. Until that time, only hypotheses can be created to truly explain this type of discourse in speeches. Maybe presidents use religious language in speeches because, as rulers of a government, they must use such discourse. Aristotle says in *Politics*: “A tyrant must put on the appearance of uncommon devotion to religion. Subjects are less apprehensive of illegal treatment from a ruler whom they consider god-fearing and pious.”

Although presidents cannot be described as tyrants, the point is still made regarding governmental leaders and the need to appear religious, also a contending point of Novak.

The larger question for all this discourse would be “what does this kind of discourse, particularly religious, used by politicians, especially presidents, do to our ideals, particularly religion? Civil religious references draw the listener back to “America,” however one wishes to define such a concept. Civil religious discourse refers a listener back to a worldly, American “religion.” These references do nothing directly to destroy American civil religion, only strengthen it. However, could religious references used by politicians destroy religion? Could religious references in speeches undermine a heavenly, universal religion?

Religion and politics have been strongly intertwined in the past, even sometimes to the point of there being no visible separation between the two. The ancient Israelites, Romans, the Holy Roman Empire of Europe, and other civilizations were all societies with no separation between religion and politics. Each of these societies fell for their own reasons; but, especially for the Holy Roman Empire during the Enlightenment, the intertwining of politics and religion spelled disaster for religion. When worldly governments that are entwined with religion fell, so did the

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45 Aristotle. *Politics*. 343 B.C.E.

46 Novak
religion. Religion, considered universal with allegiances above that of the state, suffers when so closely related to politics, especially when the state suffers. So, could these religious references by presidents hurt religion?

“Perhaps” is the best answer to this question at this point. If the listener to an inaugural or State of the Union address hears religious references and disagrees with the statement or with the speaker, it is conceivable that a listener could begin to think negatively about religion. A listener, especially one not greatly educated on religion, might draw the conclusion that religion supports issue “A” or policy stance “B,” and if the listener does not agree with the statement, then he or she might not agree with religion either. Of course, such statements are for purely hypothetical thought only at this point and outside the scope of this study. However, connections are possible.

Also, use of religious imagery by presidents could lead to the politicalization of religion, if such politicalization has not already occurred; therefore, religious imagery in political speeches may lead to the further politicalization of religion. Throughout history, religion has been a divisive issue among people. Once religion has been employed for state or civil religious purposes, the natural divisive nature of politics becomes intertwined with religion. One can see today how divisive religion can be, especially in the political arena. Studies are conducted to show which religions, which beliefs, and which issues best suit particular candidates, policies, and parties. Religion, contrary to the belief held by many today, is not to be a dividing issue in humanity. Religion is, by its nature, to connect and unite a diverse humanity. This connection and uniting spirit is why civil religion has developed in governments and politics - to serve the same purpose as religion.

A final problem with using religious imagery in political speeches that would undermine religion is another idea presented by Niccolo Machiavelli and used by Adolf Hitler: that religion should be used by the state as a tool to control and influence the national citizenry. If such statements are true or could become true, religion loses its real purpose, to focus a humanity that can tend to be selfish and rooted in worldly desires to aspire to something greater, higher than themselves. Religion becomes just a tool used by states to control citizens from changing the status quo or overthrowing the current system. As Karl Marx has written, “Religion is the sigh
of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.47 Religion becomes a tool of those in power to control those who are not in power. Although such Machiavellian claims for the uses of religious discourse in inaugural and State of the Union speeches a stretch, especially for this study, the idea presents more hypothetical questions and thoughts as to why politicians use religious and civil religious dialogue in speeches. So, why did President Clinton and President Bush use religious and civil religious discourse in their inaugural and State of the Union addresses? One cannot be one hundred percent sure. What does the usage of religious and civil religious references in political speeches do to civil religion or religion? One cannot be sure. However, answers to these questions would present a true analysis to a study such as the one conducted here.

47 Marx, Karl. *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*. 
Limitations

There are several limitations to this study conducted. The first, and most important, would be the subjective nature of the study. With a lack of literature and previous studies, the area of civil religion, especially some attempt at a finding, listing, and categorizing religious and civil religious references, lacks a previous scientific base that other topics in political science contain. Also, without much previous work, the very definition of civil religion is subjective. As far as this researcher read in the literature, there is no generally accepted definition of civil religion, not only within political science, but across all academic disciplines. These two limitations for the study already give the study a more subjective nature than desired by the researcher.

Furthermore, certain assumptions were made by the researcher as to which words, phrases, and references would be selected for study and which words, phrases, and references would be rejected; others may not agree on the selected and rejected references in the study. Without a strong literature or empirical study on civil religion, most of these assumptions made by the researcher were rooted in what knowledge and experience possessed so far. Even within the inaugural and State of the Union speeches themselves, there are bound to be more references to religion and civil religion missed by the researcher due to personal limitations of knowledge and experience. Therefore, these assumptions and judgments make the references selected for study biased in the fact that others may not agree with references selected and references rejected. These limitations also add more to the subjective nature of the study.

Another limitation for this study in religious and civil religious references is the fact that certain references were bound to be missed with the methodology selected. The researcher himself read the speeches to find the terms without the aid of any technology to verify the number of times a word was selected. This methodology was implored because as a plausibility probe into civil religion the main goal was to see if such terms were actually used in the speeches, what kinds of references were used, and a rough number to see if certain words were used more often than others. Although precision and accuracy were attempted by the researcher, the goal was to see if further study could be useful into such a topic. Therefore, the accuracy and the precision of this plausibility probe are not as strong as future research into this topic could be.
A final limitation to this study is the nature of the categories and methodology used to categorize the different religious and civil religious terms. As stated with several limitations, certain judgments were made by the researcher, based on knowledge and experience, which were more subjective in nature. These judgments were made because of a lack of previous empirical work into the topic of civil religion forced the researcher to base decisions on personal knowledge rather than generally accepted academia. With this in mind, categories were created in an attempt to catch the references selected for study was also subjective. As for the methodology implored to find reasons for usage (policy analysis), once again decisions were made by the researcher that lack previous work in academia. Personal knowledge and judgments were made to decipher if religious and civil religious phrases were being referenced for a particular policy goal, and if they were, which policy goal was being referenced.

All of these limitations make the study much more subjective than the researcher would have liked it to be; however, without a broad literature or a strong empirical past in civil religion, especially within political science, the researcher was forced to make personal judgments and decisions to make the study function.
Future Research

Now that this plausibility probe into religious and civil religious references in presidential speeches has shown some success and reasons to continue with study, there are several paths for future research within this topic. The first interest for future research that directly relates to this plausibility probe would be to broaden the speeches covered and to make the study more scientific. With religious and civil religious being found in President Clinton and President Bush’s inaugural and State of the Union addresses, looking at other speeches would lead to many interesting comparisons. Including other speeches by these two presidents: national televised addresses, speeches to the public during rallies, quotes during press conferences, radio addresses, all of them would give the researcher the ability to compare and contrast types of speeches and discourse used. Also, using other speeches allows the comparison between speeches during the “high times” of the civil religious experience (inaugurations and State of the Unions) and “low times” of the civil religious church (everyday discourse and speeches to particular groups).

Future research could also incorporate more presidents to give the study a more longitudinal nature. Have other presidents used the same references and the same frequency in the past or is there a point in political history where religious and civil religious references boomed? If continuing in this topic, more technology and more scientific methods could be used to accurately find the number of references for this type of discourse.

Another future research topic is in regards to what Demerath and Williams have described as the religio-political problem. With an obvious relationship between politics and religion established and some type of entwinement between the two, what stance should politics and religion take towards each other? As talked about in the analysis section of this study, politics, religion, and their relationship have had a rocky past and lead to many problems. Is this relationship between religion and civil religion dangerous for politics, religion, or the state?

Demerath and Williams, 158
Future research could determine what effect this relationship has on both politics and religion. Next, another interesting future research topic would be to compare the different speeches with president’s popularity at the time of speech. Do presidents use more religious and civil religious references when their popularity is lower as a tool to gain higher numbers or does the type and frequency of religious and civil religious discourse independent from their polling numbers?

Other topics for future research with this study include how these religious and civil religious references made by presidents and politicians get interpreted by people. These references, if actually absorbed by a listener, would get some type of interpretation; however, this interpretation would be something more private than public in nature. However, is there a common interpretation by many people that actually unites a diverse country such as the United States or is there many interpretations that lead people down different paths to the same unity desired by the politician? According to Bellah, “The meaning, the inner meaning [of civil religion] is left to private interpretation. This means there are sharp cleavages, but not anarchy.” Bellah believes that there is some sort of common interpretation within this individual, private interpretation. Although this study is not as political science as another area in academia, such a study would help to broaden and deepen the political experience and understanding of civil religion.

Yet another future research project could study what interaction and relationship actually exists between civil religion and religion. Can these two exist together at the same time? Must they be co-equal to exist at the same time? Must one dominate the other at particular times for different, particular reasons? This researcher contends that although religion might be important for politicians for whatever reason, the most important “religion” in the United States is civil religion. Civil religion is much broader and can connect to many more people than particular spiritual references can; therefore, it would appear that to the researcher than at least for American politics, civil religion must dominate religion to actually unite a diverse country to a common past, dream, and purpose larger than themselves. However, Fowler and Hertzke believe

49 Bellah, The Broken Covenant, 46.
that civil religion exists alongside other religion, but does not challenge other religions. So, analyzing the relationship between civil religion and religion would be an interesting topic to further decide what religious references in political settings affect each other.

Finally, a future research goal, especially for this researcher, incorporates many of the ideas already listed. A future research topic could further the thesis of civil religion and expand its definition to incorporate, what the researcher has termed, civil spirituality. The researcher contends that there is a difference between religion and spirituality. Religion is something more public; religion is the public actions of a follower that others can see. This differs from spirituality in that spirituality is private; spirituality is the private beliefs that one holds that others cannot see. Religion is the public face of spirituality, and spirituality is the private face of religion. In the researchers mind, one can be religious without being spiritual or spiritual without being religious. Therefore, expanding the civil religion thesis to incorporate a civil spirituality deals with figuring out how people interpret religious and civil religious references and how these references strengthen or weaken beliefs held by the citizenry.

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50 Fowler and Hertzke, 243
Conclusion

Civil religion is the collection of America’s symbols, holidays, documents, monuments, dogmas, and emotions that function in the same fashion as religious symbols, holidays, documents, monuments, dogmas and emotions that lead to a common sense of history, utility, and purpose. Examples of American civil religious artifacts include, but are not limited to, the flag, the American bald eagle, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Washington Monument, Vietnam Memorial, plurality, diversity, god, and a civic sense of nationalism. These are identical to religious artifacts such as crosses, crucifixes, Easter, Christmas, the Bible, Mecca, Jerusalem, the Trinity, forgiveness, caring, God, and a religious sense of devotion to God. Both sets of symbols serve the same purpose: to help define a group of people; to form a single, functional unit; to allow a diverse population to draw roots back to common histories, goals, and actions to serve the higher power being invoked.

With this in mind, do presidents use religious and civil religious discourse, references, and imagery in their speeches? Probably; at least President Clinton and President Bush did in their inaugural and State of the Union addresses. Are there certain words and phrases that can be tagged in these speeches that are religious and civil religious by nature, allowing them possible to study? This researcher would answer yes. Certain words, phrases, and references, such as some of the ones found in this study can be found in President Clinton and President Bush’s inaugural and State of the Union addresses that can be observed and quantified. Can religious and civil religious references be categorized so that reasons for their use be extrapolated from their reference in speeches? This researcher, again, would answer yes. Many of the references were used in the context of historical references, uniting themes, policy agendas, and other reasons that can be used to categorize their reference. Do we know why presidents use religious and civil religious references? No; although an interesting question, an answer cannot be found directly in this study, if a real answer could ever be found.

However, these religious and civil religious references do serve at least the most direct reason for their employment by presidents, at least President Clinton and President Bush: they unite a
diverse population to look beyond themselves. If civil religion is an attempt to unite a diverse citizenry to a common history, goal, or purpose, then civil religious references should do just that. If religion is to help make a worldly, self-centered people look to something higher, then religious references should do just that. Democracy needs religion to survive; democracy needs something to make people look beyond themselves and think about freedom and the higher faculties of life. This is what Alexis de Tocqueville thought when he wrote:

“When a people's religion is destroyed, doubt invades the highest faculties of the mind and half paralyzes all the rest. Each man gets into the way of having nothing but confused and changing notions about the matters of greatest importance to himself and his fellows. Opinions are ill-defended or abandoned, and in despair of solving unaided the greatest problems of human destiny, men ignobly give up thinking about them. Such a state inevitably enervates the soul, and relaxing the springs of the will, prepares a people for bondage.”

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So, what conclusions and hypotheses can be created from this deductive, plausibility probe into religious and civil religious references in President Clinton and President Bush’s inaugural and State of the Union addresses? One, civil religion exists in some manner. Two, presidents use these references in their speeches. Three, these references are made for a particular reason, even if just to add an air of significance or stress a point. Four, more advanced, detailed future research must be done into this field to expand, explain, and discover more about the uses of religious and civil religious references in presidential speeches.

This study was an attempt to further analyze and begin to empiricize religion and civil religion, information which has been lacking in political science academic literature. By studying their usage as discourse in political speeches by presidents, a new window of empirical work on presidential discourse has been opened. Hopefully future research can further explain religious and civil religious references in presidential speeches, the reasons for usage, and how these references actually work in the citizenry.

Thank you and “May God Bless America.”

Appendix A
Religious References, Categories, Classification, and President

General Religious References

compassionate (4) [Bush]

[references to] congregations: churches, synagogues, religious groups, African American churches, faith based, religious charities, religious initiative, religious groups, mosques (28) [Both]

conscience (1) [Bush]
destiny (2) [Bush]
dignity (1) [Bush]
eternally right (1) [Bush]
evil (12) [Both]
“evil is real and must be opposed” (1) [Bush]
faith (12) [Both]
good (5) [Both]
heavens (2) [Clinton]
ministry (1) [Clinton]
moral (2) [Bush]
religious (9) [Both]
religious tolerance (1) [Bush]
reverence (1) [Bush]
“right from wrong” (1) [Bush]
sacred (4) [Clinton]
sacred responsibility (1) [Clinton]

Specific Faith Reference
abstinence (1) [Bush]
“acts of God” (1) [Bush]
angels (4) [Both]
“belief beyond measure” (1) [Bush]
[references to] Beatitudes (3) [Bush]
[references to] Bible (direct): Galatians 6:9, Isaiah 58:12 (2) [Clinton]
“captives set free” (1) [Bush] - - reference to Isaiah 61:1-3
charity (1) [Bush]
chosen nation (1) [Bush] - - biblical references to the Jews being the “chosen nation” by God
creed (3) [Bush]
crusade (1) [Clinton]
“culture of life” (1) [Bush] - - rallying cry for pro-life movement
“day of fire” (1) [Bush] - - religious reference to Judgment Day scattered throughout Scripture
“dignity and value in God’s light” (1) [Bush] - - rallying cry for pro-life movement
eternal promise (1) [Clinton] - - religious reference to God’s promise to His believers
“faith more powerful” (1) [Clinton] - - religious reference to Christian faith
[references to] God: God, Almighty, image of Maker, Author of Liberty, Providence, Allah, His
(28) [Both]
God’s blessings (24) [Both]
God-given: capabilities, talents, potential, gifts (5) [Both]
God’s help (1) [Clinton]
“God is near” (1) [Bush] - - frequently used phrase by religious
“God is not neutral” (1) [Bush]
God-send (1) [Clinton]
“good and faithful servants” (1) [Bush] - - religious reference to Christians
grace (1) [Bush] - - God’s “physical” presence on Earth
“great love” (1) [Bush] - - reference to the relationship between God and His followers
“heard the trumpets” (1) [Clinton] - - biblical reference in Scripture to God and His return
“hope in hopeless” (1) [Bush] - - reference to God’s power
“inherit the Earth” (1) [Bush] - - quote from Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:3-5

“joyful mountaintop” (1) [Clinton] - - reference to Heaven and reference used in Scripture

“just God” (1) [Bush]

just war (3) [Bush] - - reference to Catholic just war theory

Koran (1) [Bush]

“larger than self” (1) [Bush] - - religious reference to acting for others

“lift eyes to the mountaintop” (1) [Clinton] - - reference to Heaven and reference used in Scripture

“longing of the soul” (1) [Bush] - - religious reference to humans longing for God

“Lord’s Gallery” (1) [Clinton] - - reference to Heaven

miracles (3) [Bush]

New Covenant (11) [Clinton] - - biblical reference to Noah and the flood as well as God’s new promise in Jesus Christ

new land (1) [Clinton] - - biblical reference to God telling Abram to go to a “new land,” Genesis 12: 1-8

Our Lady of Hope (Catholic Church) (1) [Clinton]

“overcome evil with greater good” (1) [Bush] - - religious reference to the struggle between good and evil

[references to] particular faiths: Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, Muslim, “noble faith” (Islam), Star of David, Crescent, Christian (21) [Both]

plague (1) [Bush] - - biblical reference

prayer (7) [Bush]

promised land (1) [Clinton] - - biblical reference to current day Israel / Palestine

quotes from religious leaders (1) [Clinton]

reborn (1) [Clinton] - - religious reference to baptism

[references to] religious leaders: Cardinal Bernadin, Pastors, church leaders, Reverends, ministers, priests and nuns (11) [Both]

“road to Jericho” (1) [Bush] - - biblical reference to the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37

“rock in raging sea” (1) [Bush] - - biblical and religious reference to Jesus Christ

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sacred covenant (1) [Clinton] - religious reference to marriage
sacred institution (9) [Bush] - religious reference to marriage
sacrifice (3) [Clinton] - biblical and religious reference to Jesus Christ
saint (1) [Bush]
“seed upon the wind” (1) [Bush] - religious reference to those who do not believe in Jesus Christ
Sermon on the Mount (1) [Bush] - Matthew 5:3-5
“service, mercy, and heart for the weak” (1) [Bush] - religious references to Christian ideals
soul (5) [Both]
truths of Sinai (1) [Bush] - religious references to the Ten Commandments
“unjust encounter justice” (1) [Bush] - religious reference to Judgment Day
“What Congress has given, let them not take away” (1) [Bush] - reference to phrase “What God has given, God has taken away”
“wonder working power” (1) [Bush] - reference to religious hymn
Appendix B
Civil Religious References, Categories, Classification, and President

American Government References
democracy (86) [Both]
list of former presidents: “previous five presidents” [up to Clinton], Washington, Jefferson,
  Lincoln, T. Roosevelt, Wilson, F.D. Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon,
  Carter, Reagan, Bush (41), Clinton] (39) [Both]
republic (2) [Both]
self-government (4) [Bush]
sovereignty (1) [Bush]
voting / election (19) [Both]
[references to] Washington D.C. (23) [Both]

American Documents / Monuments References
“We hold these truths... all are created equal” (3) [Clinton]
Amendment (5) [Both]
Bill of Rights (11) [Both]
Constitution (12) [Both]
Declaration of Independence (3) [Both]
flag (6) [Bush]
Liberty Bell (1) [Bush]
“life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (1) [Clinton]
“more perfect union” (9) [Clinton]
National Parks / Treasures: Yellowstone, Everglades, Lake Tahoe, national parks, Utah’s red
  rocks, “national landmarks,” “national treasures” (9) [Both]
Pledge of Allegiance (1) [Bush]
Star Spangled Banner (2) [Both]

References to America’s Past

4th of July (1) [Clinton]
1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia (1) [Clinton]
Ancestors: Mayflower, slave ships, Ellis Island (1) [Clinton]
civil rights (3) [Both]
Civil War (2) [Clinton]
cold war (17) [Both]
depression (5) [Both]
Francis Scott Key (1) [Clinton]
Gulf War (1) [Clinton]
Harriet Tubman (1) [Clinton]
historic responsibility (7) [Clinton]
Homestead Act (1) [Bush]
Iwo Jima (1) [Clinton]
list of former presidents: “previous five presidents” [up to Clinton], Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, T. Roosevelt, Wilson, F.D. Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush (41), Clinton] (39) [Both]
Founders (13) [Both]
immigrants / immigration (22) [Both]
Martin Luther King, Jr. (2) [Both]
Oklahoma City bombing (5) [Clinton]
Pearl Harbor (1) [Bush]
Pennsylvania [September 11, 2001] (2) [Bush]
Pentagon (1) [Bush]
revolution (5) [Both]
Rosa Parks (1) [Clinton]
Rudolph Giuliani (1) [Bush]
“saved the union” (1) [Clinton]
September 11, 2001 (14) [Bush]
[references to] slavery (5) [Both]
Thomas Edison (1) [Clinton]
U.S.S. Cole (2) [Both]
Vietnam (3) [Clinton]
Virginia [September 11, 2001] (2) [Bush]
World Trade Center towers / New York [September 11, 2001] (5) [Bush]
world wars (4) [Clinton]

“Uniting” Themes References
“American spirit” (2) [Clinton]
“beloved country” (1) [Clinton]
“glory of America” (1) [Clinton]
“God Bless America” [song] (1) [Bush]
“land we love” (1) [Clinton]
“Made in the U.S.A.” (1) [Clinton]
“One America” [and others]: one people, one common destiny, one nation, common culture,
common identity, common ground, common good, one country (13) [Both]
“single hand over a single heart” (1) [Bush]
[references to] soldiers (154) [Both]
war (29) [Both]

General Principle References
“American dream”(8) [Clinton]
challenge (9) [Clinton]
civic duty (1) [Bush]
civil society (1) [Bush]
courage (28) [Both]
destiny (2) [Clinton]
diversity (8) [Clinton]
duty (1) [Bush]
English (1) [Clinton]
equality / equal (8) [Both]
fairness / fair (2) [Bush]
freedom / free (156) [Both]
hard work (5) [Both]
history / historic (64) [Both]
independence (3) [Both]
j ustice (33) [Both]
law (5) [Both]
liberty (51) [Both]
opportunity (46) [Both]
pluralism (1) [Bush]
possibility (5) [Both]
prosperity (15) [Both]
responsibility (77) [Both]
rights (12) [Bush]
sacrifice (1) [Bush]
service / serve (25) [Both]
tolerance (5) [Both]
union (3) [Both]
united / unity (4) [Both]
Random References

“Freedom Now” (1) [Bush]

“Voice of America” (1) [Bush]
Appendix C

Religious References, Categories, Classification, and President for Policy Areas

AIDS: African American churches (1) [Bush], faith based groups (1) [Bush]
abstinence: abstinence (1) [Bush]
addiction: church (1) [Bush], miracles (2) [Bush]
campaign finance reform: sacred (1) [Clinton]
children [child support, protection]: sacred (1) [Clinton], God-given capabilities (1) [Clinton],
pastors (1) [Bush], churches and synagogues (1) [Clinton]
crime: churches and synagogues (1) [Bush]
education: crusade (1) [Clinton]
faith based initiatives: soul (2) [Bush]
foreign policy: Catholics and Protestants (1) [Clinton], Jews (1) [Clinton], destiny (1) [Bush],
Islam / noble faith (7) [Bush], evil (60 [Clinton], “hope in hopeless” (1) [Bush], God-
given (1) [Bush], “evil principle” (1) [Bush], religion (1) [Bush], [references to] God (1)
[Bush], and blessed country (1) [Bush]
gun control: God’s blessing (1) [Clinton]
health care: miracles (1) [Bush]
marriage: “sacred institution” (1) [Bush], “union of man and woman” (1) [Bush], “sanctity of
marriage” (1) [Bush]
morality: faith (1) [Bush], “right from wrong” (1) [Bush]
natural disasters: plague (1) [Bush]
service: Islam / Muslim (1) [Bush]
smaller government: religious (1) [Clinton]
social security: dignity (1) [Bush]
stem-cell research: “culture of life” (1) [Bush]
terrorism: religious (1) [Bush], soul (2) [Both]
taxes: “What Congress has given, let them not take away” (1) [Bush]
war: “just cause, just means” (1) [Bush]
welfare reform: religious congregations (3) [Clinton]
Appendix D

Civil Religious References, Categories, Classification, and President for Policy Areas

AIDS: opportunity (1) [Bush] history (1) [Bush]

Americorps / Peacecorps / Freedomcorps: serve / service (8) [Both], Kennedy (1) [Clinton]

arts: “American spirit” (2) [Clinton], common culture (1) [Clinton], and liberty (1) [Clinton]

balanced budget / deficit control: “hard work” (2) [Clinton], history / historic (2) [Both],

    constitution (1) [Clinton], amendment (2) [Clinton], [references to] troops (1) [Clinton],
    Truman (2) [Clinton], Reagan (2) [Clinton], responsibility (4) [Both], serve (1) [Clinton],
    and prosperity (2) [Both]

Base closures: [references to] troops (2) [Clinton]

campaign finance reform: democracy (6) [Clinton], Fourth of July (1) [Clinton], [references to]

    Washington D.C. (1) [Clinton], elections / voting (1) [Clinton], and fair (1) [Bush]

censorship: [references to] troops (1) [Clinton], freedom (1) [Clinton], and responsibility (1)

    [Clinton]

crime: responsibility (1) [Clinton], constitution (1) [Clinton], amendment (1) [Clinton],

    [references to] Washington D.C. (2) [Clinton], justice (1) [Bush], equal (1) [Bush], and
    freedom (1) [Clinton]

disabled: freedom (1) [Bush] and equality (1) [Bush]

discrimination: Republic (1) [Clinton], Civil War (1) [Clinton], civil rights (1) [Clinton],

    [references to] troops (1) [Clinton], justice (1) [Clinton], serve / service (1) [Clinton],
    common identity (1) [Clinton], and equal (1) [Clinton]

domestic spending: responsibility (1) [Bush]

economy / business: historic responsibility (2) [Clinton], history (1) [Bush], challenge (1)

    [Clinton], responsibility (1) [Clinton], [references to] Washington D.C. (1) [Clinton], and
    immigration (3) [Bush]

education / schools: opportunity (6) [Both], responsibility (1) [Clinton], [references to] troops (4)

    [Clinton], “hard work” (1) [Clinton], unity / unified (1) [Clinton], serve (1) [Clinton],
    history / historic (2) [Bush], and [references to] Washington D.C. (2) [Bush]
environment: Yellowstone (1) [Clinton], Everglades (2) [Clinton], Lake Tahoe (1) [Clinton], national parks (1), and Utah’s red rocks (1) [Clinton]
equal pay: equal (2) [Clinton]
faith based initiative: serve / service (1) [Bush]
family support / relationships between families: historic responsibility (1) [Clinton] and responsibility (5) [Clinton]
finances: opportunity (2) [Clinton], historic responsibility (2) [Clinton], history / historic (2) [Clinton]
foreign policy: freedom (47) [Both], opportunity (1) [Clinton], challenge (1) [Clinton], responsibility (8) [Both], justice (5) [Both], self-government (1) [Clinton], [references to] troops (60) [Both], democracy (43) [Both], Eisenhower (1) [Clinton], independence (1) [Clinton], cold war (2) [Clinton], prosperity (1) [Clinton], wars (16) [Both], Truman (2) [Both], diversity (1) [Clinton], Oklahoma City bombing (1) [Clinton], history (6) [Both], [references to] Washington D.C. (2) [Both], rights (4) [Bush], courage (2) [Bush], liberty (16) [Bush], sovereignty (1) [Bush], constitution (4) [Bush], elections / voting (5) [Bush], serve / service (1) [Bush], T. Roosevelt (1) [Bush], Kennedy (1) [Bush], Reagan (1) [Bush], justice (1) [Bush], law (2) [Bush], bill of rights (1) [Bush], “Voice of America” (1) [Bush], republic (1) [Bush], war (1) [Bush], pledge (1) [Bush], brave (2) [Bush], honor (1) [Bush], flag (1) [Bush], tolerance (1) [Bush], Pearl Harbor (1) [Bush], U.S.S. Cole (2) [Both], and law (1) [Bush]
frivolous lawsuits: justice (1) [Bush]
gun control: quote from T. Roosevelt (1) [Clinton] and courage (1) [Clinton]
health care: history / historic (1) [Clinton], responsibility (6) [Both], Nixon (1) [Clinton], T. Roosevelt (1) [Clinton], Truman (1) [Clinton], Carter (1) [Clinton], liberate (1) [Clinton], [references to] troops (1) [Bush], bill of rights (2) [Bush], serve / service (1) [Bush], and common ground (1) [Bush]
helping children: responsibility (2) [Clinton] and [references to] troops (2) [Clinton]
“helping middle class:” responsibility (1) [Clinton] and bill of rights (1) [Clinton]
Homeland Security: responsibility (2) [Bush]
immigration: responsibility (2) [Clinton], democracy (3) [Clinton], English (1) [Clinton],
Ancestors [Mayflower, slave ships, native Americans] (1) [Clinton], “American Dream” (1) [Clinton], diversity (1) [Clinton], freedom (1) [Clinton], opportunity (1) [Clinton],
and serve / service (1) [Bush]
judicial nominations: justice (4) [Both], responsibility (2) [Bush], constitution (2) [Bush],
democracy (1) [Bush], and serve / service (1) [Bush]
mariage: constitutional amendment (1) [Bush] and constitution (1) [Bush]
Medicare: historic responsibility (4) [Clinton]
military / defense spending: challenge (1) [Clinton], [references to] troops (13) [Both], cold war (3) [Both], responsibility (1) [Clinton], flag (1) [Clinton], honor (2) [Bush], brave (1) [Bush], courage (1) [Bush], freedom (1) [Bush], national landmarks (1) [Bush], serve / service (1) [Bush], volunteer (1) [Bush], and loyalty (1) [Bush]
minimum wage: opportunity (1) [Clinton] and prosperity (1) [Clinton]
morality: responsibility (2) [Bush], revolution (1) [Bush], honor (1) [Bush], and free (1) [Bush]
national parks [money for]: history (1) [Bush]
poverty reduction: freedom (1) [Bush]
scientific funding: revolution (1) [Bush] and opportunity (1) [Bush]
senior citizen support: opportunity (1) [Clinton], challenge (2) [Clinton]
service: [references to] troops (1) [Clinton], [references to] President Bush - 41 (1) [Clinton], opportunity (2) [Both], and freedom (1) [Bush]
smaller government: opportunity (3) [Clinton], responsibility (5) [Both], “American Dream” (1) [Clinton], [references to] Washington D.C. (11) [Both], Kennedy (1) [Clinton], [references to] troops (1) [Clinton], and history (3) [Clinton]
social security: history (1) [Clinton], responsibility (2) [Both], [reference to] President Bush - 41 (1) [Bush], [reference to] President Clinton (2) [Bush], and baby boom (1) [Bush]
taxes: [references to] Washington D.C. (1) [Clinton], history (2) [Clinton], opportunity (1) [Bush], prosperity (1) [Bush], fair (2) [Bush], “hard work” (1) [Bush], Kennedy (1) [Bush], and Reagan (1) [Bush].
trade: “Made in the U.S.A.” (1) [Clinton], democracy (4) [Clinton], freedom (8) [Both], equal (1)
[Clinton], opportunity (2) [Both], prosperity (2) [Bush], and “previous five presidents” (1) [Bush]
welfare: responsibility (8) [Clinton], courage (1) [Clinton], [references to] Washington D.C. (1) [Clinton], and service (1) [Clinton]
war: serve / service (2) [Clinton]
war on drugs: [references to] troops (4) [Clinton]
Year 2000: history (1) [Clinton], serve / service (1) [Clinton], Thomas Edison (1) [Clinton], Harriet Tubman (1) [Clinton], Star Spangled Banner (1) [Clinton], and G. Washington (1) [Clinton]
Appendix E
Final Tallies

NOTE: Numbers are in reference to the times the research observed a president referencing a term in study.

President Clinton:
- Inaugurations
  Religious: 21
  Civil Religious: 83
  Total: 104
- State of the Unions
  Religious: 72
  Civil Religious: 449
  Total: 501
- Totals
  Total Religious: 93
  Total Civil Religious: 532
  Total: 625

President Bush:
- Inaugurations
  Religious: 54
  Civil Religious: 112
  Total: 166
- State of the Unions
  Religious: 122
  Civil Religious: 474
  Total: 596
-Totals
  Total Religious: 126
  Total Civil Religious: 586
  Total: 712

Total Religious References: 219
Total Civil Religious References: 1118

**Grand Total of Religious and Civil Religious References: 1337**
Works Cited


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