

God At The Grass Roots: The Christian Right In The 1994 Elections

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MEDIA COVERAGE OF UNCONVENTIONAL RELIGION: ANY "GOOD NEWS" FOR MINORITY FAITHS?

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With disturbing frequency, media coverage of new or nontraditional religions has been challenged by scholars as inflammatory, distorted, and infused with disparaging stereotypes. Though occasional abuses and excesses do occur in such groups, it appears that the assumption of misdeed is the norm among news reporters. The tendency to cast unconventional religions in an unfavorable light raises the unsettling question of bias. This paper examines the substance of these claims and suggests possible sources of news bias, both cultural and organizational. An overview of major issues and concerns is provided and directions for future dialogue between scholars and journalists are discussed.

Can mass media coverage of new or nontraditional religion over the last several decades be characterized generally as fair, impartial and dispassionate? There is substantial research to suggest otherwise (Beckford, 1985, 1994a, 1994b; Beckford and Cole, 1988; Bromley and Breschel, 1992; Bromley, Shupe and Ventimiglia, 1983; Coplin, 1990; Green, 1991; Lindt, 1979; Selway, 1992; Richardson, 1995; Shupe and Hadden, 1995; van Driel and Richardson, 1988a, 1988b; van Driel and van Belzen, 1990). A growing number of scholars have expressed concern about the role of the media in constructing narratives that accentuate a particularly sinister picture of new religious groups, as if these innovations are intrinsically pathological or harmful to both their own members and society. To what extent can we attribute such constructions to cultural factors such as ignorance of religion or prejudice? Or even organizational factors such as inadequate resources or time constraints?

Religious illiteracy among reporters is an acute problem recognized within the professional ranks of journalism. ABC's senior anchor and editor of World News Tonight, Peter Jennings, in an essay that appeared recently in a Harvard Divinity school publication, made the following observation:

I have only recently come to understand how complicated and inadequate and occasionally horrifying media coverage of religion has been. Peter Steinfelds of the New York Times and others who cover religion much more thoroughly than I do, know and have said in various forums that ignorance, incompetence and insufficient resources are serious inhibitions to understanding the role that religion plays in the world. I would venture that in the overwhelming majority of newrooms in America there is an appalling ignorance of religion and faith (1996:15, emphasis added).

Jennings' reference to "religion and faith" here most likely denotes denomi-

God at the Grass Roots, is composed of entirely new and original essays that analyze the impact of the Christian Right in the national. book provides a timely follow-up to the editors' previous examination of the elections. God at the Grassroots: The Christian Right in the Elections (Religious Forces in the Modern Political World) (Paperback) - Common [Edited by Clyde. In the only book-length examination of the Christian Right's impact on the historic elections, leading scholars of religion and politics, and national and state. God at the Grassroots: The Christian Right in the Elections. Edited by Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, p. God at the Grassroots: The Christian Right in the Elections. Edited by Rozell Mark J. and Wilcox Clyde. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, p. God at the Grass Roots, The Christian Right in the American Elections trends that have dramatically evolved since the landmark elections of Similar Items. God at the grassroots: the Christian right in the elections / By: Wilcox, Clyde, Published: (); Second coming: the new Christian. surveys of Christian Right delegates to Republican party conventions. God at the Grass Roots: Elections. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield. Christian right or religious right is a term used mainly in the United States to label conservative Its influence draws, in part, from grassroots activism as well as from focus on social . Members of the Christian right are willing to do the electoral work needed to see their 42 (3): doi/janicegilbertsonwriter.com The three of them have previously collaborated on God at the Grass Roots: The Christian Right in the Elections and God at the Grass Roots, The. debates involving public education to build grassroots support for a larger (Eds.), God at the grass roots: The Christian Right in the elections. Lanham. many Christian Right leaders, conservative Catholics appear to be a particularly God at the Grass Roots: The Christian Right in the Elections. Keywords Christian Right, platforms, religion and politics, state Republican parties .) God at the Grass Roots: The Christian Right in the Elections. The Christian Right is a powerful force in contemporary state Republican party politics. In this article, I Bruce, Steve, Peter, Kivisto, Swatos, William H. . God at the Grass Roots, The Christian Right in the American Elections. The Christian Right's voters and interest groups (political action committees, God at the Grass Roots: The Christian Right in the Elections, Lanham, MD: . The Christian Right and the Politics of Public Education. . answer to rampant social problems was for Christians alone to run for elected office" (, p. . Yet, the incendiary conspiracy rhetoric can rally the grassroots for yet another crusade . God at the Grassroots, The Christian Right in the American Elections. Texas, and Virginia) in the extraordinary midterm elections (Kansas, Maine, . God at the Grassroots: The Christian Right in the Elections by Rozell, Mark J. and a great selection of similar Used, New and Collectible Books available.

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