Book Proposal

One Nation Under God:
Corporations, Christianity and the Roots of the Religious Right

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The inauguration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower was much more than a political ceremony. It was, in many ways, a religious consecration.

Though such a characterization might startle contemporary Americans, the voters who liked Ike so much they elected him president twice, by overwhelming margins, would not have been surprised. In his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention, the presidential nominee had promised the coming campaign would be a "great crusade for freedom." Out on the stump, Eisenhower met often with his close friend, the Reverend Billy Graham, to receive spiritual guidance and recommendations for passages of Scripture that he might use in his speeches. Indeed, the candidate talked so much about spirituality on the campaign trail that the legendary *New York Times* reporter Scotty Reston likened his efforts to "William Jennings Bryan's old invasion of the Bible Belt during the Chatauqua circuit days." The American people rallied to the Republican, giving him 55% of the popular vote and a whopping 442 to 89 margin in the Electoral College. As Eisenhower reflected on the returns, he resolved to use his mandate to effect a national religious revival. "I think one of the reasons I was elected was to help lead this country spiritually," he confided to Graham. "We *need* a spiritual renewal."

The inauguration set the tone for the new administration, placing considerable emphasis on public shows of faith. Some of his supporters wanted Congress to designate Eisenhower's inauguration a National Day of Prayer, but even without the official label it nevertheless bore all the markings of one. In the past, incoming presidents attended religious services on the morning of their inauguration, but they were usually discrete. Before Harry Truman's inauguration in 1949, for instance, the president, his family, and

a few cabinet officials made an unannounced visit to St. John's Episcopal Church for a brief fifteen-minute service, with only a few regular parishioners witnessing the moment. President Eisenhower, in contrast, turned spirituality into spectacle. At a pre-inaugural meeting with his cabinet nominees, he announced that they and their families were invited to a special religious service at National Presbyterian Church the morning of the inauguration. "He added hastily as an afterthought that, of course, no Cabinet member should feel under pressure to go to the Presbyterian services," Chief of Staff Sherman Adams remembered; "anybody could go instead to a church of his own choice." Given a choice between worshipping *with* the president or worshipping *without* him, almost all chose the former. More than 150 of Ike's supporters joined the extended Eisenhower clan for services. The event had been publicized widely in the press, so the attendees arrived to find a full church with a crowd of eight hundred more onlookers waiting outside in the morning chill. This presidential prayer service was repeated across Washington. All of the city's Catholic churches opened for the occasion, while Jewish and Protestant houses of worship acted on their own initiative. St. John's Episcopal, which had previously held quiet services for incoming chief executives, now offered a series of brief prayer services for the public, every hour on the hour. The *Washington Post* noted that even the city's first mosque, though still under construction, would nevertheless be open "for all Moslems … who wish to invoke Allah's aid for the Republican administration."

Public prayer was a highlight of the actual inauguration festivities as well. Chief Justice Fred Vinson, who was on hand to deliver the oath of office, certainly appreciated the religious emphasis. When he had been appointed to the high court a few years earlier,

the Kentuckian had taken part in a "consecration ceremony" sponsored by a new prayer breakfast group in the Senate. Before a gathering of 28 senators and the attorney general, the new Chief Justice of the United States had spoken reverently about "the importance of the Bible being the Book of all the people and how the whole superstructure of government and jurisprudence is built upon it." Now he beamed broadly as the new chief executive did the same. As Vinson delivered the oath, Eisenhower's left hand rested not on one Bible, but *two*. Each was opened to a passage recommended by Billy Graham. A black leather-bound Bible, given to Eisenhower by his mother upon his graduation from West Point, was opened to II Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Graham repeatedly cited the verse in public as a sign that God wanted America to repent. The second Bible, a Masonic version used by George Washington at the very first inauguration, was positioned to another such passage in Psalm 127: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

Immediately after completing the oath, in his first official words as president, Eisenhower asked the 125,000 Americans in attendance – as well as the estimated 70,000,000 more watching live on television – to bow their heads so he might lead them in "a little private prayer of my own" that he had written that morning. "Almighty God," he began, "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." The prayer caused a minor sensation, not because of anything said in it, but simply because it had been said. A half-mile from the Capitol ceremonies, crowds on Pennsylvania Avenue listened to the prayer as it came out of portable speakers. "There was an electric something," an observer noted, "that seemed to summon the waiting multitudes to their knees." An instant sensation, Eisenhower's "inaugural prayer" was soon reproduced in countless newspapers and magazines. An oilman from Shreveport, Louisiana, meanwhile, printed up the prayer in a pamphlet, with a photograph of the smiling president on the left, the American flag on the right, and the cross directly overhead. At the bottom ran a prayer of his own: "God Save Our President Who Saved Our Country and Our World!"

The religious themes of the inauguration were replayed repeatedly in the early weeks of the administration. The first week of February 1953 was exceptionally busy, but it purposefully set the tone for his entire presidency. On that Sunday morning, Eisenhower became the first president ever to be baptized while in office, taking the rite at the National Presbyterian congregation. The very same night, the president delivered an Oval Office address for the American Legion's "Back to God" ceremonies, urging the millions watching and listening to remember the spiritual foundations of the nation. Four days later, Eisenhower was guest of honor at the first-ever National Prayer Breakfast. Now an annual tradition, the first event was hosted by hotel magnate Conrad Hilton with a crowd of more than 500 dignitaries, including a number of senators, representatives, Cabinet members, ambassadors, and justices of the Supreme Court. Fittingly, the inaugural theme was "Government Under God." The convening pastor led the "prayer of consecration" for the new president, before Eisenhower offered some brief remarks of

his own. "The very basis of our government is: 'We hold that all men are endowed by their Creator' with certain rights," the president reflected. "In one sentence, we established that every free government is embedded soundly in a deeply-felt religious faith or it makes no sense." The president made it clear that he would put that message personally into action, as he instituted the first-ever opening prayers at a Cabinet meeting the very next day. While the president seemed sincere, it took some time before it became a natural habit. His secretary recalled a time when Eisenhower emerged from a cabinet session only to exclaim: "Jesus Christ, we forgot the prayer!"

All this took place in just the first week of February 1953. In the months and years that followed, Eisenhower led the nation on a massive religious revival that was nothing short of revolutionary. Official programs of prayer swept through countless executive departments, including the Pentagon. The rest of the Capitol consecrated itself too. In 1954, Congress followed Eisenhower's lead by formally adding the phrase "under God" to the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance. Two years later, they made a similar phrase, "In God We Trust," into the country's first official motto. During these revolutionary years, Americans were told, time and time again, that the nation not only *should* be a Christian nation but that it *had* always been one. They soon came to believe that the United States of America was "one nation under God."

And they've believed it ever since.

Overview

This book seeks to transform Americans' assumptions about the basic relationship between religion and politics in their nation's history. For decades now, liberals and conservatives have been locked in a seemingly intractable struggle over an ostensibly simple question: Is the United States a Christian nation? Much of this debate has focused on endless parsing of the intent of the Founding Fathers, but it has ultimately generated more heat than light. Like most scholars, I believe the record is fairly clear about the founding generation's belief in the need for a firm wall of separation between church and state, a belief they spelled out clearly and repeatedly in public statements and private correspondence. However, I realize that this scholarly consensus on the matter has done little to shift popular opinion. Indeed, if anything, the country has moved to an even tighter embrace of religion in the public sphere and political culture in recent decades. Accordingly, *One Nation Under God* begins with a rather different premise. It lays aside the question of whether or not the founders intended America to be a Christian nation. Instead, it seeks to answer the question of why so many Americans now firmly believe that their country was, has been, and always should be a Christian nation.

The answer, I argue, can be found in the two decades after the Second World War. During this period, the country underwent an incredible transformation in how it understood the role of religion in public life. The religious revival of the postwar era was unmistakable, with Eisenhower leading the country on a new crusade. Only months into his term, his speechwriter Stanley High took note of the ever-present religious references and spiritual invocations in Eisenhower's presidency in an article in *Reader's Digest*. "They are the plainest thread that runs through all his speeches," High observed. "They

are the most frequently recurring theme of his conversations. He has made them the solemn basis of his charge to the men and women he has called to be on his team." As the national revival of the 1950s continued, Eisenhower's emphasis on religion only grew. The Republican National Committee announced that he was, indeed, "the spiritual leader of our times" while his own re-election campaign plastered billboards across the country with a simple slogan: "God and Country: That's Eisenhower, How About You?"

Though the official acts of the federal government under Eisenhower were transformative, they were echoed and amplified by the acts of private organizations and ordinary citizens. The "Back to God" movement of the American Legion was just one of countless such crusades in this spirit. Religious leaders like Reverend Billy Graham and Monsignor Fulton Sheen led the country in religious revival, but so too did seemingly unlikely candidates like the United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. Corporate leaders bankrolled massive campaigns encouraging a return to prayer in public, and fostered faith in their own companies as well. The most prominent ad agency of the decade, the J. Walter Thompson Company, urged citizens to attend churches and synagogues through an unbelievably massive "Religion in American Life" campaign. Hollywood got into the act as well, with the legendary director Cecil B. DeMille helping erect thousands of Ten Commandments monuments across the nation as part of a promotional campaign for the film of the same name. Meanwhile, celebrities such as Jimmy Stewart, Bing Crosby, Gregory Peck and Ronald Reagan lent their voices to the cause as well. Inundated with urgent calls to embrace faith, Americans did just that. While less than half of all Americans claimed

membership in a church or synagogue before the Second World War, by the end of the 1950s more than 69% did – an all-time high.

While the broad popular support for this religious revival was remarkable, the nearly complete lack of opposition was as well. Some spiritual leaders might have complained that the religious revival was superficial, but they applauded the overall thrust. In politics, meanwhile, the only conflicts that ensued came as Democrats and Republicans fought for credit for the increasingly popular campaign to wed together patriotism and piety. Legal scholars claimed there was nothing to fear from these changes, insisting that the nation's adoption of mottos like "one nation under God" and "In God We Trust" did not undermine the separation of church and state. Such acts of "ceremonial deism" were, in the words of Yale Law School Dean Eugene Rostow, harmless bits of ornamentation, "so conventional and uncontroversial as to be constitutional." The Warren Court gave sanction to these changes, with outspoken liberal Justice William O. Douglas going so far as to conclude that public invocations of religion were ironclad proof that Americans were "a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being." Even the civil liberties organizations that modern readers might expect to have objected did nothing. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) paid practically no attention to these issues, believing its energies were better directed to combating the excesses of McCarthyism. Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, the most significant organization of its kind, focused on other matters as well. As suggested by its original name – *Protestants* and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State – it worried largely about Catholic organizations seeking public money for parochial schools. In the end, these civil liberties organizations largely

acceded to the common claim in the era that the First Amendment mandated separation of church and state, but not separation of religion and politics. Support for a specific sect was wrong; support for the generically sacred was fine.

In the end, then, the present-day assumptions of the Religious Right rest on a foundation of fact. There once *was* a time in which virtually all Americans agreed that their country was a Christian (or, in their more ecumenical moments, "Judeo-Christian") nation. That time was much more recent than these Americans believe, and as this book will show, for a much shorter duration – but it existed all the same. And importantly, it managed to etch itself (quite literally, in some cases) into the nation's identity. It consumed the national motto and the pledge of allegiance. It became part of the important ceremonies of civic life and created even more new ones of its own. It transformed American politics and revolutionized the ways in which ordinary Americans understood their country.

And yet, for all these changes, it is a story that has largely been forgotten.

To be sure, a small number of writers have paid attention to these changes. But in doing so, most have downplayed their significance and almost all have misunderstood their origins. These authors treat the marked religiosity of the postwar era as little more than a sign of the staid and starched character of the conservative 1950s, a brief moment of piety that would be swept away by the turbulent 1960s. To the contrary, the changes in these years represented a radical revolution in the relationship between religion and politics in modern America, one whose impact would increasingly be felt over the next half century.

Indeed, as the later chapters of this book will make clear, the religious nationalism of the Eisenhower era was a critical step in the ultimate creation of the Religious Right. As the movement of ceremonial deism moved from the Capitol out to communities across the country, it often took the form of new, formalized systems of school prayer. As state and local governments composed new programs of Bible reading and, in some cases, composed entirely new prayers of their own to be recited by school children, ceremonial deism no longer seemed harmless to all. In one of the more compelling legal dramas of the century, ACLU-backed lawsuits reached the Supreme Court in the early 1960s, forcing the justices to reconsider their earlier acceptance of religion in the public sphere. When the court struck down state-sponsored programs of school prayer and Bible reading in 1962 and 1963, the public backlash was immense. In thousands of angry letters sent to the justices, political leaders and ordinary Americans alike drew on the new slogans and symbols of religious nationalism that had only been enshrined the previous decade. Their letters pointed to the public religion of the Eisenhower era as an ironclad refutation of the doctrine of separation of church and state. The litany of examples varied from letter to letter, but the sentiment remained the same. "Our nation has been greatly blessed 'under God,'" read a petition from 49 Charlotte residents, "and our motto 'IN GOD WE TRUST' should be emphasized in every phase of our national life." An angry mother from Phoenix wrote, "As for me and my family, we believe in the Free America, which was brought forth by our Founding Fathers – under God!"

The backlash over the Supreme Court's rulings sparked a massive national conversation about the proper relationship between religion and politics in America. Stunned by the massive outpouring of public anger on the issue, political leaders rushed

to catch up with their constituents. All fifty governors joined together in a statement calling for a return of voluntary school prayer and demanded that Congress act quickly. In truth, the nation's legislators needed no prodding. Between the summer of 1962 and the spring of 1964, 113 representatives and 27 senators introduced 146 different proposals for constitutional amendments to restore prayer and Bible reading to public schools. They had received an unprecedented amount of correspondence on the issue, with one estimate claiming that fully 50% of all the mail sent to the House and Senate during the 1963-1964 term focused on the idea of amending the constitution to allow for school prayer. These letters, postcards and petitions overwhelmingly supported proposals for an amendment, with some officials citing margins of nearly 20 to 1 in favor of the idea. Not surprisingly, when the Gallup Poll asked Americans in August 1963 if they approved of prayer and Bible reading in public schools, 70 percent said yes.

With such an overwhelming array of popular and political support behind it, the call for a new "prayer amendment" seemed likely to sail through Congress and then be ratified by a majority of the states with equal speed. In a dramatic twist of history, though, the congressional hearings on the issue, which many assumed would be simply a formality, instead prompted a major debate on matters of church and state. Proponents of the prayer amendment insisted that it would be easily implemented and its impact would only affect the schools. But legal experts and religious authorities warned that the proposals under consideration by Congress would radically reshape the religious status quo, effectively destroying the First Amendment and replacing it with something entirely new – and unknown. In the end, the campaigns for constitutional amendments failed in Washington. Disillusioned, conservative activists began organizing at the grassroots to

fight for their religious rights and, in time, to form the organizations that would coalesce just a decade later into the Religious Right.

Few studies currently appreciate the importance and impact of the new public religion of the Eisenhower era, but even those that do make a fundamental error in locating the origins of these changes. Without exception, the works on the religious revival of the era attribute these changes solely to the influence of the Cold War. According to this conventional wisdom, as America fell under the thrall of the anti-communist panic, its leaders sought to emphasize the nation's religious traits as a means of distinguishing it from the "godless communists" of the Soviet Union. In this rendering, the religious nationalism of the era was insincere and transitory, little more than a propaganda point that could be cast aside as international relations evolved. This perspective is, however, completely wrong.

As *One Nation Under God* will make clear, this revolutionary transformation in America's religious identity had its roots not in the foreign policy panic of the 1950s but rather in the domestic politics of the 1930s and early 1940s. Decades before the inauguration of President Eisenhower, conservative religious leaders worked closely with corporate titans to plant the seeds for a powerful new union of patriotism and piety. As their private correspondence and public claims make clear, this new religious nationalism sought to challenge the state power that its architects feared most – not the Soviet regime in Moscow, but the New Deal administration in Washington. With ample funding from major corporations – including household names like General Motors, Kraft Foods, J.C. Penney, and Hilton Hotels – conservative clergymen and their political allies advanced a

new ideology that was best characterized as "Christian libertarianism." In an impressive array of newspapers, magazines, radio programs, television specials, sermons and massive public events, these new evangelists for free enterprise argued explicitly that the New Deal was nothing but a program of "pagan statism," one that violated all of the Ten Commandments. The Roosevelt administration, they argued, had essentially made a "false idol" of the federal government, leading Americans to worship it rather than the Almighty; it caused Americans to covet what the wealthy possessed and sought to steal from them; and, ultimately, it bore false witness in making wild claims about what it could never truly accomplish. Above all, they insisted that the welfare state was not a means to implement Christ's teachings about caring for the poor and the needy, but rather a perversion of His doctrine. In a forceful rejection of the public service themes of the Social Gospel, they argued that the central tenet of Christianity remained the salvation of the individual. And if any political and economic system fit with the religious teachings of Christ, it would have to be a system rooted in a similarly individualistic ethos. Nothing better exemplified such values, they insisted, than the capitalist system of free enterprise.

By the late 1940s, this message of "Freedom Under God" was being publicized by religious leaders like Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham and conservative icons ranging from former president Herbert Hoover to future president Ronald Reagan. As this message moved to center stage in American political life during the Eisenhower era, the new religious nationalism eroded some of the underlying arguments of the New Deal. But it did more than its corporate creators ever dreamed possible. It succeeded in convincing a wide range of Americans that the country was, at heart, a Christian nation.

In the end, the politicization of religious conservatives was essentially an unintended consequence of the revolt against the New Deal.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One

"Freedom Under God":
Corporations and Christianity

This opening chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book by chronicling the ways in which corporate leaders created a new form of "Christian libertarianism" as a means of striking back against the New Deal. Their reputations in tatters after the stock market crash and ensuing Depression, the titans of industry worked in vain to reclaim their rightful place as leaders of the nation, pouring millions of dollars into PR campaigns run by lobbyists like the American Liberty League. Their efforts, however, were roundly mocked. ("They ought to call it the 'American Cellophane League,'" the head of the Democratic Party joked, "because first, it's a DuPont product, and second, you can see right through it.") Unable to sway Americans on its own, big business outsourced the job to clergymen. Their reasoning was clear. As Sun Oil CEO J. Howard Pew pointed out, recent polls showed that "of all the groups in America, the ministers had more to do with molding public opinion" than any other group. Accordingly, a impressive array of corporate titans poured millions into the creation of new organizations of ministers who would evangelize for free enterprise.

The chapter focuses on the most important of these new organizations, a group called Spiritual Mobilization. Led by the Reverend James W. Fifield, Jr., the charismatic pastor of a posh Los Angeles church, Spiritual Mobilization promoted a new blend of faith and free enterprise that it summed up simply as "freedom under God." At heart, Fifield and his allies understood Christianity and capitalism as inextricably intertwined. Spreading the gospel of one required spreading the gospel of the other. While unfettered capitalism was the embodiment of Christ's will, the welfare state of the New Deal was nothing less than "pagan statism."

The chapter will describe the ways in which Spiritual Mobilization spread its gospel of faith and free enterprise – through a monthly magazine, weekly radio spots, and, most impressively, a nationwide campaign of "Freedom Under God" festivities on the Fourth of July. The first of these, held in 1951, was backed by corporate donations and led by an impressive array of conservative critics, all sponsoring local ceremonies, a national sermon competition, and a massive radio program coordinated by Cecil B. DeMille with Jimmy Stewart serving as master of ceremonies. Together, these forces succeeded in introducing the phrase "freedom under God" – with its obvious conservative political meaning – across the nation.

Chapter Two

The Great Crusades:
Prayer and Politics in Postwar America

Chapter Two tells a related story to that of Chapter One, chronicling the ways in which a sudden surge of prayer in national politics in the late 1940s and early 1950s was born out of a similar alliance between conservative clergymen and wealthy backers. It uses three interrelated stories to explain how this unfolded.

The first traces the rise to power of Abraham Vereide, a Norwegian immigrant and Methodist minister who created the powerful Fellowship Foundation. (Modern readers will likely recognize this as the shadowy group that runs the "Fellowship House" on C Street in Washington D.C., the place to which conservative congressmen invariably turn when they have been caught in a sex scandal.) Vereide's entrance into politics came in the 1930s, when he began organizing prayer meetings for wealthy industrialists in San Francisco and Seattle as those cities were rocked by violent labor struggles. He found a new calling in leading the rich and powerful to prayer, first in the halls of corporate America and then in the halls of Congress, where he established new prayer breakfast meetings in the House and Senate. The National Prayer Breakfast, which has now become an annual ritual in Washington, was also his creation.

The second story follows the rise of Billy Graham. Though rarely thought of as an evangelist for big business, Graham certainly was in his early days. His ministry was financed in large part by the billionaire oilman Sid Richardson and he worked closely with corporate leaders. ("God bless you and thank you," he told one gathering, "and God bless the Holiday Inns.") He filled his sermons with dire warnings about the "dangers that face capitalistic America." The Garden of Eden, he told one rally, was a paradise with "no union dues, no labor leaders, no snakes, no disease." In 1952, he brought his conservative message to D.C. in a massive "Washington Crusade" that included the first-ever religious service held on the steps of the Capitol. In the immediate term, his efforts succeeded in persuading Congress to establish the first-ever mandated National Day of Prayer, but it also injected a good dose of religion into national politics writ large.

The third story in this chapter follows Dwight D. Eisenhower's path to the presidency. An intimate of both Abraham Vereide and Billy Graham, the general never would have even run had it not been for pressure applied by them and their surrogates. He helped popularize their calls for religious revival in America, linking a return to public prayer with a forceful rejection of the welfare state in a presidential campaign that he repeatedly likened to a "great crusade."

Chapter Three

"Government Under God":
Religious Revival and the Eisenhower Administration

Chapter Three turns to the early years of the Eisenhower presidency, showing the ways in which the new administration encouraged the spread of a powerful new blend of piety and patriotism.

The chapter begins with a quick exploration of one of Eisenhower's most famous quotations, his assertion that "our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply-felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is." Liberal critics mocked him for the line – joking that Ike was apparently "a very fervent believer in a very vague religion" -- but his lack of precision was intentional. He understood that in a diverse nation long divided by doctrinal differences, religion could only serve a public role if it were reduced to its lowest common denominator (or rather, its lowest common denomination). Only a bland faith could be broad.

And so this chapter tells the fascinating story of the many ways in which Eisenhower elevated this new national religion to a position of prominence. The inaugural ceremonies sketched briefly in this proposal's opening vignette are explained in full here, as are the early actions of his administration in events like the first presidential baptism, the "Back to God" ceremonies of the American Legion, and the first Presidential Prayer Breakfast.

Moreover, this chapter will explore the ways in which Eisenhower's Cabinet helped advance this theme of "Government Under God" on their own. Many of them were deeply devout and readily joined this new crusade. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, a minister's son and an elder in the Presbyterian Church, piously carried his religious convictions to his new post. He proselytized the Pentagon, making so many references to religion and spirituality in his official speeches that the president compared him to "an Old Testament prophet" while the White House press secretary called him a Puritan. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, meanwhile, was a member of the ruling Council of Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The most prominent Mormon official ever to serve in the federal government, he worked to bring religion to the USDA.

The chapter will end with an amazing story – never before seen in print – about the "March of Freedom." A campaign led by the National Association of Evangelicals, the March of Freedom sought to get political leaders to sign a document affirming that the government of the United States was founded on "Seven Divine Freedoms" drawn from the 23rd Psalm. President Eisenhower happily signed the document in a major Oval Office ceremony, with Vice President Nixon, the entire Cabinet, several Justices of the Supreme Court and most of the nation's governors following suit. The government, they all agreed, was founded on faith in God.

Chapter Four

"In God We Trust":
Ceremonial Deism in the Rise of Religious Nationalism

Chapter Four then turns to Congress, where legislators readily followed the lead of the Eisenhower administration by pushing through a number of significant changes that, while allegedly small and symbolic, fundamentally revolutionized the ways in which Americans understood the relationship between religion and politics in their nation.

The chapter begins with a stunning story about the campaign in 1954 for the "Christian Amendment." If passed by Congress, it would have amended the Constitution to affirm that "This Nation devoutly recognizes the authority and law of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Ruler of nations through whom are bestowed the blessings of Almighty God." While the amendment ultimately failed to pass, its supporters soon found other ways to recognize the "authority and law" of God.

The rest of this chapter relates the stories of two of the most important such changes – the 1954 decision to add the phrase "under God" to the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance and the 1956 decision to adopt "In God We Trust" as the nation's first official motto.

The story of how the Pledge of Allegiance found religion is a fascinating one. The author of the original pledge was something that would have seemed to be an oxymoron in the Eisenhower era: a self-styled "Christian socialist" who railed against the power of the new corporate elite in turn-of-the-century America. A half-century later, as the movement of "under God consciousness" swept the nation, organizations like the Knights of Columbus began to call for that phrase to be added to the pledge. Congress was soon flooded with mail, and the change quickly seemed to be a foregone conclusion. In light of the massive outpouring of support, congressional passage seemed inevitable. As an editorial in *The Christian Century* noted, "This is the sort of proposal against which no member of Congress would think of voting, any more than against a resolution approving of motherhood." The only conflict in Congress came over just which of the many sponsors would get formal credit for the bill. It was swiftly passed, with President Eisenhower signing it into law on Flag Day 1954. A televised ceremony, hosted by CBS's Walter Cronkite, soon showed congressmen and senators reciting the new pledge on the steps of Congress, as a lone bugler played "Onward Christian Soldiers."

The national embrace of "In God We Trust" was just as effortless. The phrase, which had appeared on some coins since the Civil War, took on much larger proportions during the Eisenhower years. In 1954, the phrase appeared on the first regular-issue postage stamp with a religious message; in 1955, it was added to paper currency for the first time; and then finally, in 1956, it was adopted as the nation's first official motto. Though many Americans assumed "E Pluribus Unum" was the country's official motto, it had never been so designated. And in any case, a message of unity through diversity simply could not compete with the more powerful message of unity through divinity.

Chapter Five

"Applied Christianity":
The Promotion of Faith in Industry and Advertising

Chapter Five moves back to the world of business, exploring how business leaders promoted religion on the job.

It begins with a discussion of a new movement for workplace religion known as "industrial chaplaincy." Throughout the 1950s, corporations began to experiment with a new practice of employing full-time ministers who would tend to their workers and, it was hoped, reduce the frequency of labor strikes and, in time, make the unions irrelevant. The chapter will provide accounts of individual ministers who worked at sites like the massive River Rouge plant of the Ford Motor Company, the cigarette manufacturing centers of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, and a number of independent oil refineries. It will also chronicle the ways in which businesses introduced more informal programs of workplace religion, with special attention to the prayer breakfasts introduced by Abraham Vereide and the "industrial prayer meetings" that were a vital part of the Billy Graham Crusades.

Following this discussion of the business world's efforts to bring religion to their own workers, the chapter will shift its attention to the ways in which corporate America sought to encourage a religious revival of all Americans. The chief venue here was an impressive advertising campaign called "Religion in American Life." Executed by the leading "mad men" of the era, the J. Walter Thompson firm, and coordinated by the Advertising Council, the Religion in American Life campaign was a massive undertaking that used millions of newspaper ads, magazine pieces, radio spots, television specials, highway billboards, subway and train signs, restaurant prayer cards and placemats, and a host of other forms of advertising to saturate virtually every space in American life with an endlessly repeated message about the importance of religion in their own lives and, importantly, in the life of the nation. This was nothing less than propaganda for prayer.

Chapter Six

Hollywood and the Holy Word:
The Promotion of Faith in Entertainment

Chapter Six turns to another business that was highly skilled at persuasion: the entertainment industry. It begins with a sweeping overview of the many ways in which popular culture during the Eisenhower era – film, television, radio, books, newspapers, magazines, etc. – were dominated by religious stories and spiritual messages. Then the chapter turns to explore two fascinating stories about the ways in which Hollywood promoted public faith and, through it, conservative politics.

The first story explores the politics behind Cecil B. DeMille's 1956 blockbuster The Ten Commandments. The legendary director had long been an ally of Rev. Fifield and Spiritual Mobilization, and he saw his biblical blockbuster (one of the most popular films of all time) as a continuation of that same cause. In promotional appearances for the film, DeMille made the connection clear. "We're still fighting the same battle that Moses fought," he noted. "Are men to be ruled by God's laws? Or are they to be ruled by the whims of a dictator, like Rameses II? Are men property of the state? Or are they free souls under God?" The movie itself pressed this message, but a promotional campaign for the film would have an even longer legacy. DeMille worked with the Fraternal Order of Eagles to construct literally thousands of stone Ten Commandments monuments and place them in public parks and government buildings across the country. As this chapter will show, many of the Ten Commandments monuments that have been the subject of recent litigation were, in fact, simply part of a PR campaign for an old film.

The chapter then turns to an equally compelling story about an organization called the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade. Led by a colorful if unlikely leader, an Australian doctor named Fred Schwarz, the CACC mobilized conservative celebrities like Ronald Reagan and Pat Boone to advance a politics that fused patriotism and piety. The group held religiously-themed "Christian Anti-Communism Schools" across the nation, giving future leaders of the Religious Right like Phyllis Schlafly their first roles as activists. It also sponsored a star-studded and controversial event billed as "Hollywood's Answer to Communism," an event that helped launch the political careers of Republican politicians like George Murphy and Ronald Reagan.

Chapter Seven

"The Fourth 'R'":
Prayer and Bible Reading in Public Schools

Chapter Seven turns to the most contentious site of prayer: the public schools.

It begins with the story of the Gideons International. An organization of evangelical businessmen, the Gideons are commonly known for their work placing Bibles in hotel rooms, but in the 1950s they sparked a national controversy when they sought to distribute an abridged version of the New Testament to public school children across the land.

The chapter then turns to the topic of prayer in the public schools. While local schools had often employed informal prayers, the religious revival of the Eisenhower era led officials at the state and district level to institute rigorous new programs of prayer. The chapter tells in rich detail the most famous of these programs, that of the New York State Regents' Prayer. It will chronicle the drama, from the creation of this prayer by school bureaucrats in 1951 through the local struggles over its implementation in New York City and its suburbs in the coming years and on to the landmark Supreme Court case of *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and the immense public backlash to the court's ruling against state-sponsored school prayer there.

The chapter then shifts its focus to the related issue of state-sponsored programs of Bible reading. As with prayer, the 1950s witnessed a new moment in which informal practices of Bible reading were written into law and made into formal lesson plans. The chapter will trace the legal struggle that arose from two very different challenges to these practices – one from a devout family of Unitarians in the Philadelphia suburbs, and another from Madelyn Murray, an outspoken atheist from Baltimore who soon came to be known as "the most hated woman in America." It will return to the Supreme Court for another discussion of the legal drama there, this time in the landmark case of *Abington v. Schempp* (1963).

Chapter Eight

"The Soul of America":
The School Prayer Amendments and the Roots of the Religious Right

This chapter explores the massive backlash to the Supreme Court's decisions against state-sponsored prayer and Bible reading in the public schools. Though it has long been forgotten, these rulings prompted two sustained campaigns for the passage of a new constitutional amendment that would have specifically allowed for prayer in public schools and, in so doing, likely would have superceded the First Amendment.

Though more than a hundred different amendments were proposed by Congress in the wake of the school prayer rulings, their advocates soon rallied around the one offered by Congressman Frank Becker, a Catholic from Long Island. The story of the Becker Amendment's rise to prominence – with massive rallies of public support and behind-the-scenes maneuvering in Congress – is a terrific political tale. As the chapter will show, the months of hearings on the Becker Amendment in the House of Representatives sparked a national debate over the relationship between religion and politics. As the ceremonial deism of the Eisenhower era was called into question, religious conservatives began to mobilize at the grassroots for the first time. As they did so, they were stunned to see that religious leaders, who worried about any changes to the First Amendment, were siding against them and with the Supreme Court. Accordingly, they reached out beyond the confines of their individual faiths to form new ecumenical alliances of conservative laymen, in an early form of the coalition that would take shape a decade later as the modern Religious Right.

Religious conservatives pressed their case once again, this time in the Senate with an amendment advanced by Senate Minority Leader Everett Dirksen, but came up short once more. But during this push, the nation's major religious bodies found themselves forced to reckon with the revolt of their rank and file. Some of these, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, found themselves pulled away from their centuries-old support for the separation of church and state and drifting more and more to the right. Others, such as the National Council of Churches, stood fast in support of church-state separation but found their base of support crumbling fast beneath them. In the end, the amendment did not pass, but the debate over it radically transformed the leading religious bodies in the nation and set the stage for the creation of new ones that would be firmly committed to a conservative vision of religion and politics.

Epilogue

The epilogue will take the story from the struggles of the mid-1960s up to the present day.

It will describe a generational shift, showing how figures familiar to modern readers fit into the story of the book. It will show, for instance, the lessons that the evangelist Pat Robertson learned from his father, U.S. Senator A. Willis Robertson. The senior Robertson had been a close ally of figures like Vereide and Graham and fought fiercely for passage of the school prayer amendments. When he failed – and was denied re-election soon after as a result – his son Pat vowed to restore the ideology of religious nationalism for which his father had fought, ultimately by founding the powerful Christian Coalition and making a strong run for the presidency in 1988.

Through Robertson's story – and those of others like Jerry Falwell, Tim LaHaye and Jim Dobson – the epilogue will show the ways in which a new generation of leaders were inspired by the church-state struggles of the 1960s (and their memories of the religious revival of the Eisenhower era) to create the modern Religious Right in the 1970s and beyond.