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Christian Fundamentalism Permeates the Republican Party: Sarah Palin's links to the Christian Right

Some days ago, most Americans had never heard of Alaska Governor Sarah Palin. Now, following her Vice Presidential acceptance speech, viewed live by more than 40 million people, Palin is viewed favorably by 58% of American voters according to the latest Rasmussen Reports survey. The self-described 'hockey mom's' poll ratings, if they are to be believed, are that of a rock superstar who is rated now higher than either McCain or Democrat Obama. The same Bush-Cheney propaganda apparatus that made the nation believe that Saddam Hussein was the new Hitler and that Georgia was a helpless victim of ruthless Russian aggression after 8.8.08 in Georgia is clearly behind one of the most impressive media propaganda efforts in recent history—the effort to package Republican Vice Presidential candidate, Sarah Palin, Governor of Alaska for less than 19 months, to be the American dream candidate. Her religious roots are something she has been deliberately vague about. It's worth a closer look.

As I discuss in some detail in my soon-to-be-released book, **Full Spectrum Dominance: Totalitarian Democracy in the New World Order**, one of the most significant transformations of American domestic politics over the past three decades since the early 1970's, when George H.W. Bush was head of the CIA, has been the deliberate manipulation of significant segments of the population, most of them undoubtedly sincere believing people, around the ideology of 'born-again' evangelical Christian Fundamentalism to create something known as the Christian Right. Within the broad

spectrum of fundamentalist denominations there are some currents which are particularly alarming. Sarah Palin comes out of such a milieu.

The phenomenon of the rapid spread within the United States since the 1980's of evangelical Pentecostalism is a political phenomenon which has become so influential that the two elections of George W. Bush as well as countless races for Senate or Congress often depend on the backing or lack of it from the organized Religious Right.

The spawning of some Christian Right sects also creates an ideology to drive the shock troops willing to literally 'die for Christ' in places such as Iraq or Afghanistan, Iran or elsewhere that the Pentagon needs their services. That ideology has been used to build a fanatical activist base within the Republican Party which backs a right-wing domestic agenda and a military foreign policy that sees Islam or other suitable opponents of the US power elite as Satanism incarnate. How does Sarah Palin fit into this?

The CNP: manipulating religion to political ends

Many of the religious evangelical groups in America are coordinated top-down by a secretive organization called the Committee on National Policy. Former close Bush adviser, Rev. Ted Haggard, was a member of the Committee on National Policy until a sex and drugs scandal forced him out in late 2006.

Haggard was Pastor of the New Life Church in Colorado Springs described as the 'evangelical Vatican,' and was head of the National Association of Evangelicals. Ted Haggard was also a member of a highly significant and little-understood sect known as Joel's Army or the Manifest Sons of God, the same circles which spawned Sarah Palin.

Another noteworthy member of the CNP as was Grover Norquist, the man once described as the 'Field Marshall of the Bush Plan.'

The CNP, created in the early 1980's during the Reagan era, is the nexus for several odd and quite powerful organizations. It was described by *ABC's* Marc J. Ambinder as 'the conservative version of the Council on Foreign Relations.' CNP Members include names such as General John Singlaub, shipping magnate J. Peter Grace, Texas billionaire Nelson Bunker Hunt, Edwin J. Feulner Jr of the right-wing Heritage Foundation, Rev. Pat Robertson of the Christian Broadcasting Network, Jerry Falwell, Tim LaHaye and most of the prominent names in the Christian Right around Bush. It has included prominent politicians including Senator Trent Lott, Senator Don Nickles, former Attorney General Ed Meese, Col. Oliver North of Iran-Contra fame, and Right-wing philanthropist Else Prince, mother of Erik Prince, the founder of Blackwater the controversial private security firm.¹

CNP members have also included not only the Rev. Sun Myung Moon Unification Church, definitely a bizarre formation whose founder openly states that he is superior to Christ. The CNP as well reportedly includes the Church of Scientology.²

CNP member and GOP strategist, Gary Bauer, links both. Bauer's Family Research Council was a signatory of the Scientology Pledge to remove psychology from California schools and replace it with L. Ron Hubbard's Dianetics. Bauer was also a speaker at Sun Myung Moon's Family Federation for World Peace and Unification Conference in 1996.

Religious researchers Paul and Phillip Collins describe the CNP as follows: 'The CNP appears to be a creation of factions of the power elite designed to mobilize well-meaning Christians to unwittingly support elite initiatives. The CNP could also be considered a project in religious engineering that empties Christianity of its metaphysical substance and re-conceptualizes many of its principles and concepts according to the socially and politically expedient designs of the elite. These contentions are supported by the fact that many CNP members are also members of other organizations and/or criminal enterprises that are tied directly to the power elite.'³

In order to shape public debate over the course of national military and foreign as well as domestic policy, the US establishment had to create mass-based organizations to manipulate public opinion in ways contrary to the self-interest of the majority of the American people. The Committee on National Policy was formed to be a central part of this mass manipulation.

The Committee on National Policy is a vital link between multi-billion dollar defense contractors, Washington lobbyists like the convicted felon and Republican fundraiser, Jack Abramoff, and the Christian Right. It's at the heart of a new axis between right-wing military politics, support for the Pentagon war agenda globally and the neo-conservative political control of much of US foreign and defense policy.

The CNP has been at the center of Karl Rove's carefully-constructed Bush political machine. Tom Delay and dozens of top Bush Administration Republicans are or had been members of the CNP. Few details about the organization are leaked to the public. As secretive as the Bilderberg Group if not more so, the CNP releases no press statements, meets in secret and never reveals names of its members willingly.

The elite circles behind the Bush Presidency have crafted an extremely powerful political machine using the forces and energies of the Christian Right and millions of American Christians unaware of the darker manipulations. Is Sarah Palin a part of such darker manipulations?

Sarah Palin and Dominionism

Sarah Palin it appears now, was chosen very carefully as she comes out of the very fundamentalist evangelical circles that the CNP uses to mobilize and shape America's political agenda.

Palin reportedly drew early attention from state GOP leadership when, during her first mayoral campaign, she ran on an anti-abortion platform. Normally, political parties do not get involved in Alaskan municipal elections because they are nonpartisan. But once

word of her evangelical views made its way to Juneau, the state capitol, state Republicans put money behind her campaign. According to researcher, Charley James, "Once in office, Palin set out to build a machine that chewed up anyone who got in her way. The good, Godly Christian turns out to be anything but."

The religious background of Sarah Palin is not unrelated to her bid to take the nation's second highest office. She herself has been extremely vague about that background. Given the details, it becomes clearer perhaps why.

Sarah Palin has spent more than two and a half decades of her life as a member of an Alaska church which is part of a fanatical Christian-named cult project that is sweeping across America. Palin comes out of the most radical stream of US Born-Again Evangelism known as 'Joel's Army,' an offshoot of what is called Dominionism and sometimes also called the Latter Rain cult or Manifest Sons of God. The movement deliberately attempts to remain below the radar screen.

A Dominionist soldier in McCain's Army

Sarah Palin is a product of an extreme fringe of the American Evangelical movement known variously as the Third Wave Movement, also known as the New Apostolic Reformation, or as Joel's Army, a part of what is called Dominionism. Until 2002 according to their own website, Palin was a member of Wasilla Assembly of God with Senior Pastor Ed Kalnins. Online video clips of Palin speaking from the pulpit of this church are revealing. Curiously, between the time this article was begun on September 9th and the 11th, the video was removed without explanation:

(<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article20712.htm>).

As one researcher familiar with the history of the Third Wave Movement or Dominionism describes, 'The Third Wave is a revival of the theology of the Latter Rain tent revivals of the 1950s and 1960s led by William Branham and others. It is based on the idea that in the end times there will be an outpouring of supernatural powers on a group of Christians that will take authority over the existing church and the world. The believing Christians of the world will be reorganized under the Fivefold Ministry and the church restructured under the authority of Prophets and Apostles and others anointed by God. The young generation will form 'Joel's Army' to rise up and battle evil and retake the earth for God.'⁴

The excesses of this movement were declared a heresy in 1949 by the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and again condemned through Resolution 16 in 2000.

Sarah H. Leslie, a former Christian Right leader, describes the ideology of Dominionism:

'The Gospel of Salvation is achieved by setting up the 'Kingdom of God' as a literal and physical kingdom to be 'advanced' on Earth in the present age. Some dominionists liken

the New Testament Kingdom to the Old Testament Israel in ways that justify taking up the sword, or other methods of punitive judgment, to war against enemies of their kingdom.

*'Dominionists teach that men can be coerced or compelled to enter the kingdom. They assign to the Church duties and rights that belong Scripturally only to Jesus Christ. This includes the esoteric belief that believers can 'incarnate' Christ and function as His body on Earth to establish His kingdom rule. An inordinate emphasis is placed on man's efforts; the doctrine of the sovereignty of God is diminished.'*⁵

Leslie quotes from Al Dager's *Vengeance Is Ours: The Church In Dominion*: 'Dominion theology is predicated upon three basic beliefs: 1) Satan usurped man's dominion over the earth through the temptation of Adam and Eve; 2) The Church is God's instrument to take dominion back from Satan; 3) Jesus cannot or will not return until the Church has taken dominion by gaining control of the earth's governmental and social institutions.'⁶

Sarah Leslie pinpoints to the central deception behind the current spread of Dominionism among various Protestant denominations across America today:

'Dominion theology is a heresy. As such it is rarely presented as openly as the definitions above may indicate. Outside of the Reconstructionist camp, evangelical dominionism has wrapped itself in slick packages – one piece at a time – for mass-media consumption. This has been a slow process, taking several decades. Few evangelicals would recognize the word 'dominionism' or know what it means. This is because other terminologies have been developed which soft-sell dominionism, concealing the full scope of the agenda. Many evangelicals (and even their more conservative counterparts, the fundamentalists) may adhere to tidbits of dominionism without recognizing the error...

*'To most effectively propagate their agenda, dominionist leaders first developed new ecclesiologies, eschatologies and soteriologies for targeted audiences along the major denominational fault lines of evangelical Christianity. Then the 1990s Promise Keepers men's movement was used as a vehicle to 'break down the walls', i.e., cross denominational barriers for the purpose of exporting dominionism to the wider evangelical subculture. This strategy was so effective that it reached into the mainline Protestant denominations. Dominionists have carefully selected leaders to be trained as 'change agents' for 'transformation' (dominion) in an erudite manner that belies the media stereotype of southern-talking, Bible-thumping, fundamentalist half-wits.'*⁷

Wasilla Assembly of God

Sarah Palin comes out of the circles of such Dominionist networks. Sarah Palin was reportedly re-baptized at age twelve at the Wasilla Assembly of God church. Palin attended the church from the time she was ten until 2002, over twenty-eight years. Palin's association with the Wasilla Assembly of God has continued nearly up to the day she was picked by Senator John McCain as running mate.

Palin is now under investigation for possible improper use of state travel funds for a trip she made on June 8 to Wasilla. Her trip in turns out was to attend a Wasilla Assembly of God 'Masters Commission' graduation ceremony, and a multi-church Wasilla event known as 'One Lord Sunday.' At the latter, Palin and Alaska LT Governor Scott Parnell were publicly blessed, onstage before an estimated crowd of 6,000, through the "laying on of hands" by Wasilla Assembly of God's Head Pastor Ed Kalnins, her former pastor.

The pastor, Ed Kalnins, and Masters Commission students have traveled to South Carolina to participate in a 'prophetic conference' at Morningstar Ministries, one of the major ministries of the Third Wave movement. The head of prophecy at Morningstar, Steve Thompson, is currently scheduled to do a prophecy seminar at the Wasilla Assembly of God. Other major leaders in the movement have also traveled to Wasilla to visit and speak at the church.

In his sermons, Kalnins promotes such exotic theological concepts as the possession of geographic territories by demonic spirits and the inter-generational transmission of family 'curses.' Palin has also been 'anointed,' by an African cleric, Bishop Thomas Muthee, prominent in the Joel's Army movement, who has repeatedly visited the Wasilla Assembly of God and claims to have effected positive, dramatic social change in a Kenyan town by driving out a 'spirit of witchcraft.' 8

As Governor in Juneau, six hundred miles from Wasilla, Palin attends the Juneau Christian Church of Pastor Mike Rose, an Assembly of God Third Wave church.

Sarah Leslie describes the movement which has supported Sarah Palin for most of her life:

*'New Apostolic Reformation. This dominionist sect is a direct offshoot of the Latter Rain cult (also known as Joel's Army or Manifest Sons of God). Chief architect of this movement for the past two decades is C. Peter Wagner, President of Global Harvest Ministries and Chancellor of the Wagner Leadership Institute. His spiritual warfare teachings have been widely disseminated through mission networks such as AD 2000, which was closely associated with the Lausanne Movement. A prominent individual connected to this sect is Ted Haggard, current head of the National Association of Evangelicals.'*9

C. Peter Wagner is quoted by Leslie defining his view of what he calls 'The New Apostolic Reformation,':

'Since 2001, the body of Christ has been in the Second Apostolic Age. The apostolic/prophetic government of the church is now in place. . . . We began to build our base by locating and identifying with the intercessory prayer movements. This time, however, we feel that God wants us to start governmentally, connecting with the apostles of the region. God has already raised up for us a key apostle in one of the strategic nations of the Middle East and other apostles are already coming on board. Once we have the apostles in place, we will then bring the intercessors and the prophets into the

inner circle, and we will end up with the spiritual core we need to move ahead for retaking the dominion that is rightfully ours.'-- C. Peter Wagner

Wagner, who took over Haggard's Colorado Springs center when the latter was forced to resign in disgrace, claims that there are as many New Apostolic Reformation churches in the US as Southern Baptist churches. The movement worldwide is estimated as high as 100 million people. And yet its impact is completely under the radar of most researchers outside of those in the movement itself.

An 'end-time soldier in God's army'?

All evidence suggests Palin was carefully selected by the leadership of the Bush-Cheney-McCain Republican party to galvanize the Party's activist Evangelical base, something McCain had been unable to do.

Some theological and political background to the Joel's Army or Third Wave movement as it is also known, is instructive. It teaches a radical fundamentalist creed that its adherents must actively engage in politics, to become what they term, 'soldiers in God's Army.'

The Joel's Army movement focuses on recruiting young people to sessions of writhing on the floor in uncontrollable ecstasy, calling it a sign of the 'Holy Spirit.' Children as young as five speak of having 'gotten saved.' The movement is extremely authoritarian according to those conservative Christian churches who have studied and openly oppose the sect as heretical. It teaches a dogma that echoes the infamous Manichean line of George Bush following the shock of September 11, 2001: 'There are two kinds of people in the World: Those who love Jesus, and those who don't.'

Until recently a 'general' in Joel's Army was a 32-year old Canadian, Todd Bentley. In one case, on YouTube, clips of his most dramatic healings have been condensed into a three-minute highlight reel. Bentley describes God ordering him to kick an elderly lady in the face. A report published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a watchdog group, describes the Joel's Army mass recruiting techniques of Bentley:

'Todd Bentley has a long night ahead of him, resurrecting the dead, healing the blind, and exploding cancerous tumors. Since April 3, the 32-year-old, heavily tattooed, body-pierced, shaved-head Canadian preacher has been leading a continuous "supernatural healing revival" in central Florida. To contain the 10,000-plus crowds flocking from around the globe, Bentley has rented baseball stadiums, arenas and airport hangars at a cost of up to \$15,000 a day. Many in attendance are church pastors themselves who believe Bentley to be a prophet and don't bat an eye when he tells them he's seen King David and spoken with the Apostle Paul in heaven...Tattooed across his sternum are military dog tags that read "Joel's Army." They're evidence of Bentley's generalship in a rapidly growing apocalyptic movement that's gone largely unnoticed by watchdogs of the theocratic right. According to Bentley and a handful of other "hyper-charismatic" preachers advancing the same agenda, Joel's Army is prophesied to become an

Armageddon-ready military force of young people with a divine mandate to physically impose Christian "dominion" on non-believers.' 10

Their name comes from their special focus on the Old Testament Book of Joel, Chapter Two. On his website, Bentley declares,

'An end-time army has one common purpose -- to aggressively take ground for the kingdom of God under the authority of Jesus Christ, the Dread Champion... The trumpet is sounding, calling on-fire, revolutionary believers to enlist in Joel's Army. ... Many are now ready to be mobilized to establish and advance God's kingdom on earth.'

This past March, at a 'Passion for Jesus' conference in Kansas City sponsored by the International House of Prayer, or IHOP, a ministry for teenagers from the heavy metal, punk and goth scenes, one Joel's Army pastor, Lou Engle, called on his audience for vengeance:

'I believe we're headed to an Elijah/Jezebel showdown on the Earth, not just in America but all over the globe, and the main warriors will be the prophets of Baal versus the prophets of God, and there will be no middle ground," said Engle. He was referring to the Baal of the Old Testament, a pagan idol whose followers were slaughtered under orders from the prophet Elijah.

'There's an Elijah generation that's going to be the forerunners for the coming of Jesus, a generation marked not by their niceness but by the intensity of their passion," Engle continued. 'The kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force. Such force demands an equal response, and Jesus is going to make war on everything that hinders love, with his eyes blazing fire.'

Joel's Army believers are hard-core Christian 'dominionists,' meaning they believe that America, along with the rest of the world, should be governed by conservative Christians and a conservative Christian interpretation of biblical law. There is no room in their doctrine for democracy or pluralism. To paraphrase George W. Bush, 'You're either with us or you are against us.'

Joel's Army followers are most often labile teenagers and young adults. They are taught to believe they're members of the final generation to come of age before the end of the world. Sarah Palin was twelve when she first came into these circles.

Palin recently told interviewer Charles Gibson of *ABC News* that Georgia should be granted membership of NATO. When pressed on whether this would mean that the US would be obliged to defend Georgia if Russian troops went into the country again, she replied, 'Perhaps so. I mean, that is the agreement when you are a NATO ally, is if another country is attacked, you're going to be expected to be called upon and help... We have got to show the support, in this case, for Georgia.' Is this Sarah Palin a stateswoman with foreign policy experience, or is it Sarah Palin the Dominionist who sees a potential war with Russia as part of an 'Elijah/Jezebel showdown on the Earth'?

This is the background of the woman who might well become Vice President to a 72-year old President John McCain, a man reported to have severe skin cancer and other major health problems. According to the US Constitutional succession, should McCain be incapacitated or die in office, she would become President.

F. William Engdahl is author of A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order (Pluto Press), and Seeds of Destruction: The Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation (www.globalresearch.ca). His newest book, Full Spectrum Dominance: Totalitarian Democracy in the New World Order , is due out later this fall. He may be reached through his website, www.engdahl.oilgeopolitics.net .

Notes

1 *Selected CNP Member Biographies* in <http://www.seekgod.ca/topiccnp.htm>.

2 Paul Collins & Phillip Collins, *The Deep Politics of God: The CNP, Dominionism, and the Ted Haggard Scandal* , Feb. 19th, 2007.

3 Ibid.

4 Bruce Wilson, *Sarah Palin's Churches and the New Wave Apostolic Reformation*, in <http://endtimespropheticwords.wordpress.com/2008/09/09/sarah-palins-churches-and-the-third-wave/>.

5 Sarah H. Leslie, *Dominionism and the Rise of Christian Imperialism*, accessed in <http://www.discernment-ministries.org/ChristianImperialism.htm>.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Bruce Wilson, Ibid.

9 Sarah H. Leslie, Op. Cit.

10 Casey Sanchez, *Theocratic Sect Prays for Real Armageddon*, Southern Poverty Law Center. August 30, 2008, accessed in http://www.alternet.org/story/96945/theocratic_sect_prays_for_real_armageddon/?page=entire.