



# The Christian Right in the United States - Origin, Structure, and Political Activism

*Nils Schnelle*

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Thesis (M.A.) from the year 2008 in the subject Politics - International Politics - Region: USA, grade: 1,50, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, 90 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: This thesis will address the political movement of the Christian Right, one of the most controversial movements in the American political system. Its critics have accused it of trying to establish a theocracy in the United States, of trying to strip homosexuals of their civil rights, and called it fascist, to name but a few allegations. Leaders of the Christian Right, on the other hand, have harshly attacked those they made out as advocates of "secular humanism", have accused them of anti-Christian bigotry, and have repeatedly employed extreme rhetoric when addressing their (political) adversaries. Within about twenty-five years, the movement developed from almost complete political abstinence into a highly organized political force. The subject is appealing for research for several reasons: firstly, it is a good example of how vivid and influential religion and religiously motivated political action still are, in spite of the secularization theory widely adhered to in the respective period of time. It is also still current, as there has been some fluctuation in terms of activity and degree of organization, but so far the Christian Right has not ceased to exist. The goal of the thesis is to explore the emergence of the movement, to portrait the developments that brought theologically conservative Protestants (Evangelicals) - from isolation and retreat into a subculture - to active and organized political involvement. The central questions to be answered are linked to the controversy surrounding the movement: (1) Has the Christian Right been trying to accomplish what its critics fear, a theocracy, and a Christian nation in which there would be no place for dissenters? (2) Is the Christian Right a legitimate movement operating within the frame of th

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