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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 11, 1983

M.F.

MEMORANDUM FOR JAMES A. BAKER III
MICHAEL K. DEEVER
EDWARD ROLLINS
KENNETH M. DUBERSTEIN
RICHARD G. DARMAN
DAVID R. GERGEN

FROM: FAITH RYAN WHITTLESEY *FRW*

SUBJECT: The Fundamentalist and Evangelical Groups

I thought you would be interested in the following statistics which highlight the importance of this constituency:

1. Approximately 85,000,000 Christians attend church in the United States on an average Sunday. About 125,000,000 consider themselves church-going Christians.
2. Sixty million (60,000,000) adult Christians consider themselves "born again."
3. Of the "born again" Christians, an estimated 14,000,000 are not registered to vote. In 1980, it was found that the more "fundamentalist" a congregation, the lower its percentage of registered voters tended to be. Fifty percent (50%) registered was a common finding.

The above figures are generally agreed upon by a wide variety of religious leaders. Dr. Jerry Falwell organized some significant registration drives through the churches in 1980. Most of the theologically conservative religious leaders are now receptive to suggestions that they work to get their congregations registered, but little organizational work has been done yet for the 1984 election period.

Born-again lose fervor for Reagan

By Edmond Jacoby
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

W. Times
10/4/83

Ronald Reagan could be in danger of losing the margin of support that won him the White House three years ago, according to the results of a study commissioned by New Right leader Paul Weyrich.

Evangelical Christian voters, who normally identify with Democrats, switched and voted Republican because of a perception they shared values with Reagan, Weyrich said at a press conference yesterday. President Reagan's performance on issues related to those values may be the reason that perception has not strengthened, leaving Reagan vulnerable to defeat next year, Weyrich said.

Although many in the conservative movement have been saying for months that the president's chances of recapturing the born-again Christian vote was eroding as a result of his inaction on key fundamentalist issues, like school prayer and tuition tax credits, the study by V. Lance Terrance & Associates provided the first hard evidence those claims could be correct.

According to Weyrich, the results of the study "should set off alarm bells at the White House."

"The evangelical vote is not normally a conservative Republican vote," Weyrich said. "They provided the margin of victory for Ronald Reagan in 1980 because they turned out for him." But, according to Weyrich, the evangelical voters do not seem to be rallying behind the president now.

Figures released yesterday by Terrance show Reagan narrowly edging out Democrat John Glenn by 4.1 percent, and beating former Vice President Walter Mondale by 13.2 percent, with substantial numbers of voters undecided, among 1,000 evangelical voters polled in late June.

Restricting the sample to people who identified themselves as biblical literalists, Glenn led Reagan by 6 percent, although Reagan continued to be favored over Mondale.

Weyrich defined Christian voters as issue-oriented, saying, "If they can look at a candidate and say, 'That's me!' they'll vote for him. Otherwise, they'll find another candidate."

Terrance added that failure to capture the evangelical vote on issues meant the bloc would revert to voting hand-me-down political patterns that "mostly make them Democrats."

Terrance said he thought it unlikely world events, particularly the downing of a Korean passenger plane with a U.S. congressman and 60 other Americans aboard, had made his June data obsolete. "It probably fluctuated some in September," Terrance said of public opinion. "But it shouldn't make more than about a point or so difference now."

Noting that Reagan's position has not really changed significantly against Democratic opponents compared with his polled strength against Jimmy Carter four years ago, Weyrich said he would have expected it to have improved noticeably.

"We've been looking at a number of senatorial candidates who squeaked into office and are up again. Like John Warner (R-Va.), they've made real gains. They've solidified their positions, getting support from people who voted against them."

Poll of Evangelicals Finds Glenn Matching Reagan

By Bill Peterson
Washington Staff Writer

Evangelical Christians, a group long courted by President Reagan, like Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio) almost as much as they do Reagan, according to a poll taken for a New Right group.

The survey of voter preference for president, conducted by Republican pollster Lance Tarrance, found that Reagan led Glenn by a slim 41 to 37 percent among all evangelicals, and actually trailed Glenn among "biblical literalists," those who believe the Bible is literally true.

Paul Weyrich, president of the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, told a news conference that the poll shows White House aides are mistaken when they argue that religious conservatives will support Reagan in 1984 because "they have no place else to go."

"Religious conservatives not only

have somewhere to go, but are strongly considering going, which I think is bad news for the White House," Weyrich said. "This should be a warning bell that evangelicals are not in Reagan's hip pocket."

He said Reagan will need about 60 percent of the evangelical vote to offset anticipated Democratic gains next year among blacks and women.

The opinions of 1,000 evangelicals were surveyed in the poll, financed by Weyrich's organization and conducted in late June, before the campaigns of any of the Democratic presidential contenders had attracted widespread attention.

Tarrance said he was surprised by how well both Glenn and former vice president Walter F. Mondale fared against Reagan in the poll. Mondale trailed Reagan by 13 percent (47 to 34) among all evangelicals surveyed, but only by 4 percent among "biblical literalists."

"Reagan's vote among evangelicals

hasn't been lost, but it's certainly been split," he added.

After the 1980 election, the New Right claimed that these evangelical and fundamentalist voters it mobilized had provided Reagan's margin of victory in a number of states. In the Tarrance poll, 44 percent of those interviewed said they voted for Reagan and 32.7 percent for President Carter.

As president, Reagan has paid considerable attention to leading evangelicals, inviting the Rev. Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority, to the White House on several occasions and speaking frequently before evangelical groups.

New Right groups, however, have

criticized Reagan for not pushing anti-abortion and school prayer legislation hard enough. Yesterday, the president met with a group of evangelical women at the White House.

Evangelicals comprise a hard group to define, and various pollsters have estimated they include anywhere from 20 million to 60 million Americans. Polls also have found that 91.7 percent of evangelicals questioned supported prayer in public schools, 52.8 percent favored tuition tax credits for parents who send their children to parochial schools, 39.3 percent wanted increases in defense spending and 27.3 percent opposed abortion for any reason.

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