

Abstract

This thesis explores evangelical Republican candidates and the influence wielded over them by the Christian conservative voter base. The research premise being the electoral campaigns and rhetoric utilized by both the candidates as well as faith leaders vying for more legislative influence. The first chapter is dedicated to the politicization of the church and the main points of political contention for its representatives. Here one gets to know the most influential individuals of the New Christian Right as well as the groundbreaking tactics it used to push its agenda. Furthermore a litany of vehicles used for political advancement is provided. From a theoretical standpoint comes a description of the internal party dynamics of the GOP. This is followed by a case study of specific candidates. Starting with Ronald Reagan in 1980, the chapter later focuses on the Senate career of Jesse Helms throughout the 1970's and 1980's. Then it moves on to Pat Robertson's 1988 presidential campaign and the chapter concludes with the successful 2000 campaign of Texas governor George W. Bush. The final chapter explores the impact of electing such a candidate as well as the concrete actions that were meant to appease religious voters. Finally a conclusion is available.