American Evangelists, Social Self-Interests, and Political Misalignments in Africa: Church-State Dilemmas in Multiple Contexts[*]

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In 1985, Rev. Jerry Falwell, founder of the "Moral Majority," visited South Africa where he met with South African President P.W. Botha and with other government officials and pro-government community leaders. Although his visit occurred at a time when anti-apartheid activism was at its height and terror and injustices against black South Africans were being reported daily, Falwell's assessment was that racial progress was being made in South Africa and apartheid was "gradually being put off the scene" by the South African government. He also condemned the imposition of sanctions on South Africa as a means of bringing about change in the country (although this was a widely supported strategy within the U.S. and South Africa at the time). Instead, Falwell announced his intention to invest in South African gold krugerands and in companies doing business in South Africa, and pledged a million dollar campaign by the Moral Majority to encourage other Americans to do likewise. Moreover, in addition to his failure to meet with South African anti-apartheid leaders during his visit, Falwell characterized Desmond Tutu as a "phony," stating in a news conference after his visit, Tutu is "no more a spokesman for the black majority than I am." Although Falwell later apologized for calling Tutu a phony, his antipathy for South African anti-apartheid activists was extended in subsequent months to Nelson Mandela, who he dismissed as a

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communist and a terrorist requiring careful watching. Falwell also urged a boycott of the HBO cable station for airing a dramatized biography of Mandela's life.[1]

Support for the white minority government in South Africa during the late 1980s also came from fellow American televangelist, Pat Robertson. Robertson, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network, devoted significant network airtime to interviews with white South Africans and pro-government black South Africans, as well as to "pleas for viewers to pray for stability" in South Africa. Robertson also dispatched Ben Kinchlow to South Africa, (the black co-host of the "700 Club"), to conduct an interview with South Africa's foreign minister that focused on the negative consequences of imposing sanctions on South Africa.

A few years later, with apartheid having given way to majority rule in South Africa, Robertson moved on to other controversial Africa involvements. Zairian President, Mobutu Sese Seko, when faced with opposition in 1992 from pro-democracy activists and armed rebel groups, turned his soldiers loose on thousands of persons participating in a peaceful, pro-democracy rally. Estimates were that Mobutu's soldiers shot and killed up to 250 protestors. Three weeks later, Robertson, made an appearance on Zairian national television where he hailed Mobutu as a "fine Christian and a democrat." Robertson maintained his support of Mobutu through 1995, lobbying the Clinton administration and Congress to reverse Mobutu's U.S. travel ban while arguing that Mobutu had reformed his ways. Unknown to many people at the time was that Robertson had been engaged in diamond-mining operations in Zaire for a number of years as part of a mining and timber contract with Mobutu. By 1995, the operation was declared a failure and Robertson pulled out.[2]

Not long after Robertson's retreat from Zaire, he transferred his mining and timber operations to war-torn Liberia, entering into a business and political alliance with Liberia's warlord-turned-President, Charles Taylor. Robertson signed a mining agreement with Taylor in 1999 that granted mining concessions to Robertson's mining company and a 10% equity interest in the company to the Liberian government. Robertson also began making public defenses of Taylor, whose troops or armed proxies were believed responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths in Liberia and in neighboring countries: "This man Taylor is not the monster everybody makes him out to be," Robertson stated.[3] He also defended Taylor on religious grounds, proclaiming that Taylor "definitely has Christian sentiments" and arguing that the U.S. sanctions against Liberia and withholding of military support for Taylor's government, "were undermining a Christian, Baptist president to bring in Muslim rebels to take over the country."[4] A number of Robertson's evangelical colleagues in the U.S. publicly distanced themselves from Robertson's support of Taylor. One Southern Baptist leader remarked: "I would say that Pat Robertson is way out on his own, in a leaking life raft, on this one."[5]

It is not clear, however, that contemporary alliances between American evangelists and problematic political regimes in Africa are unique to Pat Robertson (or to Jerry Falwell). In fact, what will be shown here is that Robertson's and Falwell's Africa involvements are simply a more politically and ecclesiastically troubling variant of what has been a large, and seemingly increasing, pattern of opportunistic outreach by American evangelists to top governmental leadership in Africa. When these Africa-related outreaches by theologically conservative American Protestants are placed alongside their equally close interactions over the past few decades with political officials

within the U.S., what becomes evident is a growing receptivity among this sector of Christians to close collaborations with government in general.

There has been important scholarly attention to this apparent shift in conservative Protestant understandings and configurations of church-state relations within the U.S.—specifically as a feature of 1970s and 1980s activism among white evangelicals and of African-American church based activism during and after the Civil Rights Movement.[6] And while church-state relations are an important dimension of the present analysis, so too are state-to-state relations—which, in this case, mean U.S. governmental relations with African states.

Falwell's and Robertson's public support of the South African government during the 1980s took place within a context where South Africa's President Botha was one of many anti-communist proxies of the U.S. government during intense global competition between western-bloc and communist-bloc nations. Subsequently, Robertson's collaborations with Mobutu and Taylor (which he defended by extolling the Christian virtues of the two Presidents), and then similar alliances during the late 1990s and early 2000s between American evangelists and African governments, took place as the "Islamic threat" was crystallizing as the guiding ideological principal of post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy. This 1990s emphasis upon Islam as a global security concern within U.S. foreign policy snowballed with the spread of indigenous Islamic fundamentalism in Nigeria and Sudan, and with the transplanting of Middle Eastern Islamic insurgents into African countries, as evidenced in the1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, allegedly carried out by Al Qaeda operatives. What is clear, then, in both the Cold War and post-Cold War contexts of U.S.-Africa relations, is that a U.S. priority in

its Africa dealings during these periods has been with its own global security and strategic positioning more than with Africa's social progress or development.

This history of U.S foreign relations with Africa has been aptly characterized by Peter Schraeder as "Africa as a solution for non-African problems."[7] While Schraeder is referring mainly to the proxy status of Africa within U.S. global security strategies, I also find Schraeder's characterization useful as a description of how certain American Protestant leaders have pursued Africa involvements toward what are ultimately American, rather than African, ecclesiastical and social ends. That is, in providing certain American evangelists with convenient opportunities for bolstering their ministries, public profiles, financial situations, or social objectives within the U.S., Africa has functioned as mere backdrop to an otherwise American storyline—in much the same way as it did for Johnny Weismueller in "Tarzan" or Humphrey Bogart in "The African Queen."

Governmental relations, then, both church-to-government and government-to-government, provide a theoretical lens through which to analyze Africa involvements of contemporary American evangelists. Specifically, here, I am interested in how the ideological framing of U.S. foreign policy, and a growing emphasis by theologically conservative Protestants on temporal influence, served as sources of legitimation for alliances between a cadre of high-profile American evangelists and problematic regimes in Africa.

American Missions and U.S.-Africa Policy: A Problematic Symbiosis

Africa has been impacted by two waves of missionary ferment. An initial period of missionary ferment lasting into the mid-1900s was dominated largely by European mission churches. U.S.-based churches were an important factor as well in some African countries, with both theologically liberal and conservative churches venturing forth to Africa from the U.S. during this period. Liberia and South Africa were two countries that received some of the earliest attention from U.S. churches, with a few other countries in South-Central Africa (such as Zaire and Zambia) and in West Africa (such as Nigeria and Ghana) also serving as early recipients of these churches.

African-American Baptist and Methodist groups were among the very first U.S. churches to establish a mission presence in Africa. One of the first and largest of these initiatives was certainly Liberia, established as a haven for freed American slaves. Approximately 12,000 freed slaves traveled to Liberia between 1820 and 1861 when the U.S. Civil War disrupted emigration. This episode in American colonization was sponsored largely by an American church-based group appropriately called the American Colonization Society—with active support from the U.S. government. The majority of American slaves that repatriated to Liberia were Baptists and Methodists, possessing a strong commitment to converting the native populations within the territory. Much of this early mission outreach to the native populations in Liberia was linked with the American Colonization Society.

In addition, other American church groups began sending missionaries to Liberia in the 1800s (not as repatriates but as representatives of their home church groups in the

U.S.). American Presbyterians established a presence in 1833. The Protestant Episcopal Church arrived in 1836. The Southern Baptist Convention came during the mid-1800s, left in 1875, then returned in 1960. American Lutherans arrived in 1860. An African-American church group, the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) sent missionaries to Liberia in 1873, followed closely behind by a closely related denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ), who sent missionaries to Liberia in 1876. By 1897, two African-American Baptist groups were operating in Liberia, the National Baptist Convention, USA and the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission, which had ties to more than one group of African-American Baptists. In 1919, an African-American Pentecostal group, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, began operations in Liberia. Much later, in 1960, the Southern Baptist Convention sent missionaries to Liberia (although they were present in other places within Africa earlier than this, including Nigeria where they sent missionaries prior to World War I).

The AME church was also among the first U.S. churches to establish a presence in South Africa (arriving in 1892). They were also present in neighboring countries at about the same time, including Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), where they arrived at the beginning of the twentieth century. The National Baptist Convention, USA and the AMEZ church also began operating in South Africa during the 1900s. A predominantly white Pentecostal group, the Assemblies of God, arrived in South Africa in 1917. U.S. churches active in Zaire included the American Baptists (the northern, antislavery wing of U.S. Baptists) who arrived in Zaire in the 1870s, the Southern Presbyterians (the formerly pro-slavery wing of U.S. Presbyterians) who arrived in 1891, the Disciples of

Christ (who arrived in 1897), the Assemblies of God (who arrived in 1918), and the AME church (which arrived in 1957).[8]

It is also interesting to note that Zaire, Liberia, and South Africa (and, later, Nigeria, Angola, and Sudan), were countries where American business activity was entrenched, with strong political support from the U.S. government. In Zaire, these activities were initiated as early as the 1880s, when the U.S. became the first country to establish formal political ties with Belgium's King Leopold's private annexation of the land that would come to be called Zaire. This political recognition was followed closely behind by the establishment of a number of U.S. corporations in Leopold's territory, including companies involved in the extraction of Zaire's abundant natural resources (including copper and oil) and companies involved in manufacturing industries and trade. A vigorous opponent of economic exploitation in Zaire during the late-1800s and early 1900s was the American Baptist Churches, who were able to press through certain reforms. Later on, neither American Baptists nor other U.S. mission churches featured prominently in political resistance to colonial rule in Zaire—focusing their attention, primarily and with great success, on educational activities.

By the 1970s, American corporations were an even larger presence in Zaire, integrally involved in the construction of a dam on the Zaire river, the development of the longest direct current electric line in the world (at that time), road construction, offshore oil rigs, and a General Motors plant.[9] Zaire had also by this time become a bulwark in the U.S.'s anti-communism strategies in Africa, with President Mobutu working closely with the C.I.A. and the U.S. State Department in efforts to fend off communist influence within South-Central and Southern Africa. The Mobutu era, then, very much built upon

the foundations established by Belgium's Leopold—with Mobutu treating Zaire like his own private colony and cash cow. The result of many years of this pattern was that Mobutu became one of the wealthiest men in the world while the Zairian people were among the poorest and most politically beleaguered in the world.

Robertson's business and political alliances with Mobutu in the 1980s were, therefore, built on well-established precedent. So too were Robertson's alliances with Charles Taylor in Liberia. Throughout Liberia's history, repatriated American slaves and their descendents (who came to be referred to as Americo-Liberians) influenced Liberia's social and political affairs disproportionate to their small numbers. From the outset, this was an exercise in American domination of native populations, down to the naming of the country and its capital city, Monrovia, (which was named after U.S. President James Monroe). There were at least seven major battles between the colonists and native populations between 1822 and 1843, with the U.S. Navy often called upon to intervene on behalf of the colonists.[10] In the early 1900s, there were also charges, confirmed by the U.S. State Department and the League of Nations, that Americo-Liberian government officials were trafficking locally in slaves.

In 1926, an American corporation, Firestone, was granted a lease of a million acres of land by the Liberian government and established the largest rubber plantation in the world at that time. Between 1926 and 1977, Firestone's profit margin was estimated at approximately $415 million dollars, with 25% of that going to the Liberian government and 75% transferred into Firestone's coffers in the U.S. Another American corporation operating in Liberia, the National Iron Ore Company, shipped approximately $300 million worth of iron ore out of Liberia between 1962 and 1973. As Paul Gifford notes,

these companies provided enormous benefits to the Liberian officials who were bought off by the companies, but proved exploitative of the people, both through the favorable allotments of the country's natural resources they received and (at least with Firestone) through labor practices that were just short of indentured servitude.[11]

Just as the repatriated Christian slaves and initial American church groups during the 1800s were aligned with forces of political dominations, the legacies of these transplanted Protestants and of newer ecclesiastical arrivals into the 1900s was much the same. Gifford concludes that Christian churches in Liberia were "structures of dominance" and a "pillar on which the whole oppressive structure was built."[12] He also argues, interestingly enough, that church complicity with political and economic oppression in Liberia was partly a function of financial pressures and obligations on the part of these church groups and the need to preserve their political and funding networks within the U.S. and Liberia [13] Robertson's involvements with Taylor were very much in keeping with these kinds of calculations.

One American church group with a role somewhat distinctive from many other American church groups—at least in southern Africa—was the AME church. Founded in Philadelphia in 1787 by black Americans protesting segregation within Methodism in the United States, and committed in a fairly systematic and outspoken ways to Black Nationalist ideas, AMEs first sent missionaries to southern Africa in 1892 with the establishment of mission churches in South Africa.[14] White settler and colonial governments of southern Africa viewed the AME missionaries with great suspicion because, as a black-run institution, they undermined white control. For example, when AME Bishop, Henry McNeil Turner, traveled to South Africa in the 1890s, he reportedly

“alarmed” white South Africans by his condemnations of “white imperial oppression” and his promotion of “Africa for the Africans,” and “African separate development.”[15] The AME church was also banned by the colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) for a period of time shortly after their arrival in that country the early 1900s.[16] Therefore, churches such as the AMEs proved important because of their ability to function as political organizations that provided contexts for advancing the hopes of African independence stirring in the hearts of many Africans suffering under colonial rule. In fact, African-American missionaries in general, though there numbers were relatively small in Africa compared to white American missionaries, were the most likely of these missionaries (except as outlined in the Liberian case) to be sympathetic to African social grievances and hopes of empowerment and to be greeted with suspicion and hostility by white colonial authorities.[17]

The onset of African decolonization during the late-1950s brought with it a new set of calculations with respect to both governmental and ecclesiastical relations between the U.S. and Africa. With respect to governmental relations, U.S. foreign policy swerved between two concerns. First, with independence sweeping across the continent, there were U.S. sympathies at points with African nation-building and social development. But as Duignan and Gann point out: “Anticolonialism came to be interpreted as a policy that was moral in itself, as a device for expanding American trade, and as a means for strengthening the American position where the newly independent states were endowed with a voting strength in the United Nations . . .” Moreover, anticolonialism was seen as a “weapon in the cold war”—which came to be a dominant consideration for every Presidential administration from Kennedy through Reagan (with the possible exception of

the Carter administration)[18] Although the U.S. did not participate in the "scramble for Africa" that led to the carving up and colonization of Africa by European nations, they were very much at the center of the new "scramble for Africa" embodied in the Cold War competition between western and communist bloc nations over influence within Africa.

During the 1950s through the 1970s, U.S. churches involved in African affairs (whether based in the U.S. or in Africa) were most vocally and visibly aligned with nation-building and social development priorities within Africa. Whether through the various denominational mission boards located in the U.S. or their mission initiatives within African nations, most U.S. churches concerned themselves mainly with contributing to such things as the educational and health care infrastructure of African nations and to consolidating their ecclesiastical presence in their African mission sites by solidifying their support among the African populations they served and among the newly independent African governments.

Adrian Hastings comments on the role many mission churches played in rural and remote areas as bridges between rural populations and the central governments of these African countries. During the colonial period, these ecclesiastical bridges between African governments and African population groups often undergirded colonial arrangements in ways that would lead to resentment of some churches by the African populace. In cases where churches were viewed as especially supportive of colonial interests, these churches sometimes faced retribution after decolonization and independent rule had been achieved—as was the case with some Catholic churches in Zaire.[19] Hastings notes, however, that in most cases, newly independent African governments were happy to draw upon the institutional strengths of mission churches as

resources in the nation-building process and the churches, for the most part, "were only too glad to be allowed to bless and participate in it all—even to bow and scrape on occasion."[20]

Nevertheless, Cold War approaches to Africa would gain quite an ecclesiastical boost with the emergence in the late-1970s of the so-called Religious Right—(referring to a politicized wing of theologically conservative churches that had historically remained aloof from politics). Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson were leading figures within the development of this movement. As one American religion scholar observes, by 1983, Falwell "emerged as the most outspoken defender of President Reagan's arms policy and critic of the nuclear freeze and other disarmament proposals that might leave the United States in a position of inferiority vis-à-vis the Soviet Union."[21] Falwell's anti-communist activism with respect to the African context mostly singled out the South African situation. As Falwell sided with the apartheid government in South Africa, he defended his position by way of various anti-communist assessments. Falwell warned, for example that South Africans need "our coercive and patient encouragement to clean up their act while at the same time not passing them over to the Soviets,"[22] and sounded alarm about "a red river of communism" threatening to engulf South Africa.[23]

The emergence of the Religious Right in political affairs coincided to some extent with a second period of African mission ferment which, as Paul Gifford points out, drew heavily on U.S.-based evangelical, charismatic, and Pentecostal churches, especially from the 1970's forward.[24] David Barrett et al place worldwide Pentecostal affiliation in 1970 at more than 147,000,000, and in 1995 at more than 605,000,000.[25] More than two-thirds of these Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians from the 1970 and 1995 totals were

located in Africa.[26] Patrick Johnstone estimates that between 1960 and 2000, evangelicals in tripled from roughly 5% to 15% of Africa's populations and that Pentecostals increased from about 1% to about 6%.[27] Another indicator of the vitality of this wave of evangelical and Pentecostal ferment in Africa, and of American church contributions to this wave, comes from an inventory of U.S.-based ministries operating in one specific country—Zambia. Approximately half of the U.S. denominations there have arrived since 1960, and that most of these denominations could be classified as evangelical, charismatic, or Pentecostal. Moreover, of the forty or so U.S. para-church organizations ministering in Zambia, almost all have arrived since the mid-1960's, and all but one or two could be classified as evangelical, charismatic, or Pentecostal.[28] It is important to note, however, that as theologically conservative American church groups were arriving in large numbers, theologically liberal American churches were significantly downsizing their mission operations in Africa (and around the world) and working mainly through local ministry partners in African contexts. This, in certain respects, cleared the way for this new wave of theologically conservative mission groups.

Robertson's forays into Southern Africa and West Africa took place within this context—but in his case and in the cases of a number of other American evangelists, their evangelical work within Africa clearly took political sides in quite politically conflictual contexts. For example, Robertson's 700 Club began broadcasting in Zaire in the 1990s with Robertson certainly benefiting from his access to millions of Zairians. But, as William Reno points out, this television access by Robertson (and by fellow U.S. televangelist Jimmy Swaggert) also resulted from Mobutu's desire to counter the influence within Zaire of Catholic Archbishop Monsengwo, who was an ardent opponent

of Mobutu. And, apparently, Mobutu got what he hoped for out of the deal, with Robertson prone to publicly celebrating Mobutu's Christian inclinations and Swaggert fervently preaching a gospel that deemphasized social conditions, thereby, offering an alternative theological view to the Catholic Archbishop's, where Zairian social suffering was more central to his theological position.[29] Despite the religious buttressing he received from these U.S. based ministries, Mobutu's reign did not last out the 1990s.

In Liberia, Robertson's financial dealings with Taylor were accompanied by large-scale spiritual revival initiatives. In both the business and revival activities, Robertson worked closely with a fellow American evangelist, Bishop John Gimenez of the Rock Church in Virginia Beach, who served as Robertson's point man in Liberia. Gimenez, who owns a radio station in Liberia and has invested in a Rock Church school and hospital there, assisted Robertson in successfully organizing a three-day crusade called "Liberia for Jesus." The crusade was held at the main stadium in Monrovia and was attended by Taylor (who donated $100,000 to the initiative) and by 75,000 Liberians. Taylor heaped public praise on Gimenez and Robertson for their leadership and, while speaking at the crusade itself, Taylor proclaimed Jesus to be the President of Liberia. He then laid prostrate on the stage and urged that others should also prostrate themselves before God. A Rock Church representative was quoted after the crusade as saying: "I have never seen a president giving his country to the Lord this way, prostrating in submission among a huge crowd like this one. He is a mighty man of God."[30] A Robertson spokesperson also remarked during a Christian Broadcasting Network show, that Taylor stands "as a symbol of the nation's corporate surrender to the sovereignty of Jesus."[31] By 2003, Taylor, faced with an armed insurrection in Liberia against his

leadership, resigned and moved to Nigeria. Meanwhile, a U.N backed tribunal in Sierra Leone has been convened to hear testimony about Taylor's war crimes against the people and the nation of Sierra Leone. Apparently, with Taylor's demise, Robertson may be eyeing another African leader to throw his support behind. A statement posted on the Christian Broadcasting Network website celebrates the President of Benin, Matthew Kerekou, commending him for being a born-again Christian, a convert from Marxism to Jesus, and a "hope for all of Africa." The statement also makes clear that Christian Broadcasting Network has operated in Benin since 1997 and that representatives of the television network frequently enjoy private audiences with President Kerekou in his Presidential Office.[32]

American evangelicals were also highly enthusiastic during the 1990s and into the early 2000's about Zambia's president, Frederick Chiluba, largely due to his official designation of Zambia as a Christian nation. Although Chiluba was also popular among Zambians (at least during his first term in office), his attempt to amend the constitution to allow for a third term in office was opposed by Zambians—already concerned about Chiluba's leadership due to worsening economic conditions and charges of political corruption. Chiluba contacted American televangelist Benny Hinn for support, citing "great forces of opposition against his bid." Hinn contacted Paul Crouch, the founder of the Trinity Broadcasting Network, and appeals for prayer on Chiluba's behalf were made over the television airwaves (Olsen 2001). In the end, Chiluba was unsuccessful in holding onto power and was later brought up on charges of financial malfeasance during his presidency.[33]

Then there is the very public support given to General Sani Abacha's regime during the mid-1990s by a number of high profile African-American clergymen. Abacha's Presidency was widely opposed by Nigerians and by the international community for its corruption and brutality, yet, Henry Lyons, who headed the largest African-American Baptist Convention, and Maurice Dawkins, a black Baptist minister who ran for the U.S. Senate, received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Abacha regime to press American government officials to soften their opposition to Abacha.[34] Lyons also attempted to broker oil deals with the Nigerian government, but the negotiations were never concluded primarily because Lyons was arrested and imprisoned in the U.S. in 1997 for fraudulent financial dealings. Things went decidedly bad for Abacha as well, dying suddenly in the late-1990s. The democratically elected and more highly regarded successor to Abacha, General Olesegun Obasanjo, was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by Oral Roberts University (ORU), related most likely to ORU's efforts to establish a presence in Nigeria among what is considered one of the most rapidly expanding evangelical and Pentecostal populations in the world. Obasanjo, who professes to be a born-again Christian, routinely grants audiences to American evangelists visiting in Nigeria.[35]

Conclusion:

As troubling as the high profile and problematic Africa involvements of Robertson, Falwell, and other American evangelists have been, they have in almost every instance been consistent with, or at least patterned after, the U.S. government's approach

to the African nations in question. Although Robertson's involvements with Mobutu and Taylor caused a stir within the U.S. State Department at the time[36]—it was not because Robertson's actions violated State Department sensibilities or patterns of involvement relative to Zaire and Liberia. The fact is the U.S. government helped establish and was principle backer of Mobutu's self-serving reign and, with respect to Taylor, the U.S. government worked to help gain acceptance from the Liberian people and from neighboring countries for Taylor's rule.[37] Robertson encountered criticism, therefore, not because his actions diverged dramatically from precedents established by the U.S. government, but because he did not follow the U.S. government's lead when they chose to withdraw support from Mobutu or when they pretended to have nothing to do with Taylor's rule. It could also be argued that Robertson's support of Taylor and Mobutu was very much in line with the emerging emphasis during the 1990s on supporting regimes that could serve as counterweights to Islamic militancy. With respect to Robertson's and Falwell's earlier support of the Botha regime, their positioning on this issue was hand and glove with Reagan administration policy.

Generally speaking, U.S. mission involvements in Africa—particularly as part of the post-1970s wave of missionary arrivals—have been far better, seemingly, at serving American governmental and ecclesiastical interests than they've been at serving African interests. The ideological alignments by churches with U.S. foreign policy (both during the colonial era and in more recent decades where conservative mission groups have been dominant) have been sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit; but, in either case, the underlying concern of U.S. missionary activity in Africa has been, too often, with its own ecclesiastical aggrandizement. Certainly, there have been numerous exceptions to this,

but not nearly enough (the exceptions represented primarily by post-colonial liberal mission groups, despite their scaled-down presence). Throughout, the U.S. government has pretty much had its way—but that is not unusual. African Presidents, as discussed here, gained valuable religious endorsement for Presidencies badly in need of moral buttress—although for these particular presidents, it did little to transform their political images or fortunes. The clear casualties in all this, it seems safe to say, have been American ecclesiastical integrity and African people's hopes for social progress and progressive allies. Hopefully, after nearly 200 years of getting this relationship mostly wrong, U.S. churches will do better in the 21st century in developing relations with Africa centered on integrity and commitments to African social progress.

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[1] For more on these incidents see: Associated Press, “Falwell Says Foreign Minister Calls Apartheid Wrong,” (August 18, 1985); Associated Press, “Fundamentalist Sees Racial Progress in South Africa,” (August 19, 1985); Luix Overbea, “Two Ministers’ polar Views on South Africa,” *Christian Science* Monitor (August 22, 1985); Anthony Lewis, “Abroad at Home; Black is Red,” *New York Times* (September 20, 1987); Pamela Schaeffer, “Falwell Urges Baptists to be Wary of Mandela,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (June 30, 1990);
[2] James Adams, “Top TV Evangelist Trumpets a Tyrant,” *New York Times* (August 20, 1995); Jonathon Randal, “Robertson Aids Zaire, Its Leader,” *Washington Post* (May 18 1995); Bill Sizemore, “Evangelist Lost Millions in Mines,” *Seattle Times* (March 17, 1997).
[3] Daniel Roth, “Pat Robertson’s Quest for Eternal Life,” *Fortune* (June 10, 2002).
[4] 700 Club, (7-7-2003); and Alan Cooperman, “Robertson Defends Liberia’s President,” *Washington Post* (July 10, 2003).
[5] Cooperman.
[6] Robert Boston, for example, charges that latter-twentieth century Religious Right activists were among the leading proponents of “anti-separationism,” promoting as they did a problematic reading of history that argued for the idea that the United States was founded upon Christian principles (*Why the Religious Right is Wrong About Separation of Church and State*, 67-74. Pat Robertson has been quite vocal in arguing for initial and contemporary Christian designs within American government He points to an “incredible reservoir of Christian beliefs and customs . . we have inherited from the precepts of our founding fathers and the framers of the Constitution” and claims that “the Constitution, rightly interpreted, was clearly a document based on Christian concepts of sin and justice.” He goes on to call for “concerned Christians in the West to support the growth and development of Christian principles in these emerging governments [in other parts of the world]” (Robertson, *The New Millennium*, 42, 44). On African American churches, see R. Drew Smith, “African-American Protestants, Political Activism, and ‘Liberal’ Redemptive Hopes,” in *Theology Today* 53/2 (July 1996); and David Howard-Pitney in *New Day Begun: African American Churches and Civic Culture in Post-Civil Rights America* edited by R. Drew Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
[7] Peter Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 248.
[8] Much of this data comes from David Barrett et al, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and from Paul Gifford, *Christianity and Politics in Doe’s Liberia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). See also, Vinson Synan, “The Origins of the Pentecostal Movement” (unpublished paper on file with author); and Albert Wardin, “Who are the Baptists: Africa” (Baptist World Alliance, Heritage and Identity Commission) http://www.bwa-baptist-heritage.org/hst-afr.htm.
[9] Robert E. Smith, “Historical Perspective of Zaire,” in *Mission in Mid-Continent: Zaire* edited by Dean Kirkwood. (Valley Forge: American Baptist Church, International Ministries, 1982): 46, 48, and 63.
[10] John Walter Cason, *The Growth of Christianity in the Liberian Environment* (Michigan, 1962), 87, 105.
[11] Paul Gifford, *Christianity and Politics in Doe’s Liberia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 12-13.
[12] Gifford, 57
[13] Gifford, 65
[14] Walton Johnson *Worship and Freedom: a Black American Church in Zambia* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1977), 2-3.
[15] Peter Duignan and L. H. Gann, *The United States and Africa: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 165.
[16] David J. Cook "Church and State in Zambia: the case of the African Methodist Episcopal Church" in Fashole-Luke et al, 287.
[17] See Duignan and Gann, 248-49.
[18] Duignan and Gann, 288-298.
[19] Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity, 1950*-1975 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 135-36
[20] Hastings, 148.

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[21] Richard Pierard, "Religion and the New Right in the 1980s," in *Religion and State: Essays in Honor of Leo Pfeffer* edited by James E. Wood, Jr. (Waco: Baylor University Press, 1985), 401.
[22] Bill McCloskey, "Fundamentalist and Liberal Differ on South Africa," Associated Press, (February 5, 1985).
[23] Mary McGrory, "Sinking to New Lows," *Washington Post* (August 27, 1985)
[24]Paul Gifford, "Prosperity: A New Foreign Element in African Christianity," *Religion* 20 (1990), 374; and *The New Crusaders: Christianity and the New Right in Southern Africa* (London: Pluto Press, 1991), 50.
[25] All of the Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations listed under Barrett's Protestant and Independent categories were added together to reach these totals. It is important to note that the totals will not include Pentecostal and Charismatic practitioners affiliated with mainline denominations, i.e. Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans, etc. with Pentecostal and charismatic orientations. See Barrett et al, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2001: 16-18.
[26]With respect to the 1970s totals, more than 104,000,000 of the 147,000,000 were in Africa (70%). With respect to the 1995 totals, more than 379,000,000 of the 605,000,000 were in Africa (63%).
[27] Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1993), 36.
[28] R. Drew Smith, "Missionaries, Church Movements, and the Shifting Religious Significance of the State in Zambia," *Journal of Church and State* 41 (Summer 1999), 548-550.
[29] William Reno, "Sovereignty and Personal Rule in Zaire," *African Studies Quarterly* 7/2 (Fall 2003).
[30] John Dennis, "Landmark Crusade Successfully Ends in Monrovia," AllAboutLiberia.com, (February 25, 2002.
[31] "Televangelist's Pal Charles Taylor Again Linked to Al Qaeda Money Laundering," americanatheists.com, (January 2, 2003).
[32] "Benin: Building a Message of Hope for Africa," info@cbnworldreach.org, (March 26, 1999).
[33] "Zambian President Takes Action After Churches Criticize Him," *Christianity Today* (online posting, August 8, 2002), www.christianitytoday.com.
[34] David Barstow et al, "Nigeria Sent Cash to Lyons Fund," *St. Petersburg Times* (Nov. 25, 1997)
[35] Banjo Odutola, "Devaluing ad President's Office," *The Village Square* (November 30, 2003).
[36] James Adams, "Top TV Evangelist Trumpets a Tyrant," *New York Times* (August 20, 1995).
[37] For example, Jesse Jackson, serving as President Clinton's special liaison to Liberia, was dispatched to Sierra Leone to attempt to soften Sierra Leone's opposition to Taylor's rule—(although he was shouted down and drummed out of the country by Sierra Leonian leaders for promoting this unpopular position).