

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

The Pat Robertson Trojan horse

According to inside sources in Washington, if anyone was behind the scandal that broke against Louisiana television evangelist Jimmy Swaggart in late February, it was Pat Robertson himself.

Robertson made political hay out of the demise of his fellow evangelist, by claiming that the revelations about Swaggart's sex life were a dirty trick of the George Bush camp against him, Robertson, on the eve of the Super Tuesday Southern state primaries coming up March 8.

This action by Robertson, helping to consolidate the so-called "evangelical" vote behind him, only confirmed the reports received here that it was, in fact, Robertson who orchestrated the sting, and the timing of its release, against Swaggart.

One should not underestimate the importance of personalities like Swaggart in mid-America. Swaggart was an obstacle to Robertson in the South, because he often railed against preachers getting involved in politics.

But there is more to it even than that. Robertson's operation is a Trojan horse run by the forces backing George Bush and Bob Dole.

Its purpose is twofold.

- The first purpose is tactical, in order to assure domination of the Republican presidential nomination process by the preferred candidates of the Eastern Liberal Establishment (known as the "ELE").

The "ELE" supports the campaigns of both Bush and Dole, and is fully prepared to back whichever

shows himself more capable of bamboozling the voters.

The "ELE" is also running the Robertson campaign as a wrecking operation within the conservative grassroots voter base of the party.

Giving Robertson the clout and the credibility (the second flows from the first) to achieve this purpose has required that his voter base be consolidated under his control.

This meant removing all those competing for the attention of the nation's "evangelicals." Thus, we have seen the ungraceful fall of Jim and Tammy Bakker (originally intended to take Swaggart with them by making him appear the culprit in a hostile takeover bid).

The dirty tricks surrounding the Jim and Tammy affair, which Jerry Falwell, a Bush supporter, helped to orchestrate, was followed by the fall of Oral Roberts, another influential voice in the Bible Belt.

Rather than be hurt by the fall of his fellow TV evangelists, as many thought would happen at first, Pat Robertson instead got stronger and stronger. By the time of the Iowa caucuses, it was clear that the vocal opposition to Robertson's campaign that was heard at first within the "evangelical" movement had been muted.

But then it was time for Pat to turn to the South, and Swaggart was still there—until the sting.

The *coup de grace* came when Robertson then proceeded to steal the national headlines by blaming the sting on Bush.

The classic "gang-countergang" scenario was being run to a tee. Bush and the opposition he created were sharing the limelight alone.

Meanwhile, Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.), who at the 1984 Republican National Convention was the clear heir to the conservative wing of the party, is rendered almost invisible by this

Bush-versus-Robertson flim-flam.

In this case, Kemp people were briefed on the Robertson operation against Swaggart, but reacted with a characteristic wimpishness that explains why Kemp can't figure out why he keeps getting sacked from his blind side (to use football lingo he is more likely to understand). "We wouldn't think of getting our hands dirty with any of that," a Kemp representative said. "We are trying to keep a campaign running." Not for long, at this rate, I would say.

To the "ELE," complete success for its Robertson operation would so decimate Kemp, that the "ELE" would not have to make any concessions with the conservative wing of the party for its vice presidential choice, and could select one of its own, like Gov. Tom Kean of New Jersey, for the slot.

- The second purpose behind the Robertson operation, aimed to bear fruit over the longer term under conditions of protracted economic collapse in the U.S., is to create a fundamentalist political movement in the U.S. not unlike its Islamic counterpart that now runs Iran.

It should be a matter of grave concern to all Christians that forces who do not share their religious convictions are engaged in a sinister social-engineering project to achieve this purpose, using scandal and blackmail among their tactics to clear away all the competition to their efforts to gain top-down control over such a movement.

In short, it is designed to be a neo-fascist movement, based on a uniquely American profile, which is tightly controlled at the top, but supported by millions of misguided Americans concerned for the moral decay of the country and mired in economic chaos. They would be cynically used to rip the Constitution and its principles into shreds.