The Background of the Christian Right
and their Involvement in Politics

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1. Introduction

In the 1970s the New Right movement arose and it became popular among conservative Americans in the 1980s. The Christian Right who were at the center of the New Right manifested a strong support for Ronald Reagan for the election of 1980 and 1984. Recently ‘Christian Coalition’ that has the leadership for Christian Right currently exercised a strong influence for the election of 1996 and 2000. Now they are looking for George W. Bush for a president again for the election of 2004.1) Two of the most well known Christian Right movements have been ‘Moral Majority’ by Jerry Falwell and ‘Christian Coalition’ by Pat Robertson.

Many scholars have puzzled how Christian Right became a great political power. Hofstadter’s The Paranoid Style in American Politics provided the theoretical contribution

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1) In the 1960s the liberals have promoted communalism and secularism. They have produced radical egalitarianism and individualism. With this movement American society became secularized and liberalized. Those liberals have emphasized equality of outcomes rather than of opportunities. They have concerned individual right to the extremity to the cost of drastic reduction of limits to personal gratification. This counter-cultural movement against the traditional American culture has made free sex and drug popular. They have produced unprecedented moral decay in America. The spirit of the 60s revived in the 80s and culminated with Bill and Hillary Clinton. Against this the Christian Right Movement arose.
how and why the Christian Right movements were possible.\(^2\) He explained it with psychological state of paranoia, “a chronic mental disorder involving delusions of persecution and inflated sense of self-importance.”\(^3\) His explanation aimed to analyze the character of the Old Christian Right which existed before 1960, however most liberals accept his theory to describe the character of the Christian Right in general. In the same manner Vinz described Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority as “the nationalism of Anxiety” in 1989.\(^4\) According to their understanding, the Christian Right is a psychological make-up group of people.

Surely there have been some psychological factors for the Christian Right movements however, one would fail to grasp a real picture for Christian Right if one would stick to psychological interpretation only. Opposite to the psychological interpretation most of the Christian Right people are healthy common people. It was rather an outcome of natural concerns for their own benefit to live as traditional conservative citizens. Most of them are not paranoid people. This paper shows how and why the common conservative Christians became a part of Christian Right.

II. American Traditional Values on Trial

American conservatives believe that America was intended to be a Christian nation by the founding fathers.\(^5\) However America is facing serious moral decay since 1960s. The loss of respect for authorities, collapse of the family, the decline of the civility, and the increasing number of homosexual marriage show how America is corrupted. The ratio of

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\(^5\) Ibid., 175.