

## **POSITION OF PRESIDENT AND RELIGION WITHIN POLITICAL SYSTEM OF USA<sup>2</sup>**

In their investigations of political life in the United States of America serbian scholars have not paid much attention to religion and its place in the social life of that great country. The starting point of these investigations was the assumption that, because the USA was defined by its Constitution as a secular state, it has relegated religion to a position of a secondary importance in its political life.<sup>3</sup>

This assumption is quite false. In fact, the opposite is the case: the United States of America was founded as a federation of protestant religious communities<sup>4</sup>, for which reason religion has played an important role in the creation of the constitutional and political systems of this newly created state. However, this was done in a manner which differed from the European experience. Europe had strong established churches which had existed from their very inception in symbiosis with the sovereign and were, as such, a barrier to social and political change because the Church was always closely linked with the state. The situation in the US was quite different. All the more important protestant churches originated in Europe where from the very beginning confronted with the resistance of the established Church which saw them as competition. For this reason they were always persecuted, and this persecution was the primary motivatin

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr Miroljub Jevtic, Professor, Department of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade.

<sup>2</sup> This paper is part of Project 149006 financed by the Serbian Ministry of Science.

<sup>3</sup> The first Amendent to the Constitution states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" Quoted from: 2006 *The New York Times Almanac*, p.74.

<sup>4</sup> Thus, for instance, the State of Pennsylvania was named after a leader of a Protestant sects, namely the Quakers. Their leader, William Penn, received from King Charles II the gift of a colony which was named Pennsylvania. (*The World Almanac and Books of Facts 2002*, World Almanac Books, p. 362,. Also see *Enciklopedija živih religija*, Nolit, Belgrade , 2nd ed. 1992, p.541.

for their immigrating to America. Some religious communities were actually banished by authorities and deported to America.<sup>5</sup>

Finding themselves on the new continent, where the most important freedom they experienced was religious freedom, they realized that they needed to have administration and order so that law and order, including religious freedom as well as economic independence, could be safeguarded. So they decided to create a state<sup>6</sup>. Religious values played a decisive role in the creation of this state. All scholars agree on this point<sup>7</sup>. That is why a secular political system was established after the Revolutionary War. **But this secular system was not established with a view to preventing religion from influencing politics; but rather to the contrary, it was established in order to enable religion to influence politics in the only way possible given the religious reality in the USA.** And, as the religious reality in the USA was characterized by the existence of numerous religious communities, the necessary condition for the existence of their independence was secularism. It was impossible for all religions to be established religions of the state. Nor could a single religion be the established religion because all religions had accepted diversity and had left Europe because of the lack of such diversity. Every European state had its established religion: in England it was the Church of England, in Spain and France the

<sup>5</sup> Thus, for instance, some adherents to the puritanical strain of the Church of England left the mother country and immigrated to America in search of religious freedom. In 1630, John Winthrop together with 900 other Puritans went to the present US state of Massachusetts, starting the great migration of adherents of this religious community. They were followed by other Protestants who could not find religious freedom in their mother countries. So the first group of German Menonites arrived in Philadelphia in 1683. Quoted from, 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, p.78-79. Other examples are King James I (1603-1625), who as a faithful member of the Church of England persecuted the Puritans and Roman Catholics who were then forced to emigrate to the colonies. Quoted from *Ilustrovana istorija sveta od praistorije do danas* [Illustrated history of the world from prehistory to present day], Stvarnost, Zagreb and Prosveta, Belgrade p. 105; and James's successor Charles I who sought reconciliation with Rome and persecuted the Puritans. The latter continue to emigrate to America in greater numbers. Quoted from *Ilustrovana istorija sveta...* p.109.

<sup>6</sup> Religious freedom did not immediately become a fact of life. To the contrary, conflicts among the immigrants, which had been smoldering in various countries of origin, continued. In the countries of origin these conflicts occurred between the various sects and state authorities which were on the side of the established Church. But conflicts also occurred among the various sects which were fanatically for or against various questions of dogma. For instance, the Quakers left Europe because they were persecuted by official authorities only to be met in the new country at daggers drawn by other immigrants who themselves had been victims of religious persecution in their mother countries. Thus, the first Quaker to reach America in 1656 was arrested in Boston and then exiled after being whipped. Two of his coreligionists were not so lucky. They were publicly hanged in a Massachusetts public square. We must remember that Massachusetts was a safe haven for Puritans who were searching for religious freedom. (2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, ibid. p.78).

<sup>7</sup> Thus, for example, the president and founder of the Institute of Religion and Public Policy in Washington, Joseph Griboski says: "Religious freedom is the fundamental reason for the success of the American Republic. It is the first freedom mentioned in the Bill of Rights. Our founding fathers did not see religion as a private matter which has no connection with public politics. To the contrary, they saw religion and religious people as the cornerstone of our democracy and a symbol of our vitality as a nation." Quoted from *The Hearing on State Department Annual Report on International Religious Freedom Before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on international Terrorism, Nuclear Non-proliferation and Human Rights*, p.1-2, Institute on Religion and Public Policy, (undated), Washington. See the Institute's site [www.religionandpolicy.org](http://www.religionandpolicy.org).

Roman Catholic Church, in Sweden the Lutheran Church, etc. As an American political scientist said: "The Constitution did clearly establish a secular state or a secular government, but in doing so there was no intent to prevent religion from having an influence in society broadly, and in politics specifically. There were religious ideas that had a strong influence on the Constitution itself, and the nature of the political system that was created. Religious values have been a very powerful influence for a variety of movements, including those to abolish slavery, and to promote civil rights. And religious institutions remain important places where people learn civic norms."<sup>8</sup>

We can conclude from the above quotation that secularism in the USA was conceived to serve as a conduit through which the influence of religion could reach American politics and political life. This fact seems to have escaped many European analysts, and they were led to treat American secularism in the same way in which they treated Secularism in France. And this was a mistake. Alexis de Tocqueville did not fall into this trap<sup>9</sup>. This symbiosis of religion and politics has been a characteristic of the USA from the very beginning. This fact could not be immediately recognized by political sciences because at the time of the birth of the United States of America political sciences as an institutionalized discipline were in their infancy. Consequently, **political science of religion**, which is the primary interest of this paper, did not even exist at that time<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from "Separation and Interaction: Religion and Politics in the United States," in *U.S. Society & Values*, Electronic Journal of the U.S. Information Agency, vol.2, no.1, March 1997 p.16.

<sup>9</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, French theoretician and minister of foreign affairs (1805-1859) writes: «The greater part of the English America was populated by people who, having rejected the authority of the pope and not submitting to any religious authority, brought to the New World a form of Christianity which could best be described as democratic and republican and which would be particularly conducive to the establishment of a republic and democracy in public affairs. From the beginning, religion and politics were in accord and have not ceased to be so.» Quoted from: Alexis de Tocqueville, *On democracy in America*, Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stanojevića, Sremski Karlovci, Novi Sad, 2002, p. 249.

<sup>10</sup> Political science of religion or religion and politics is a young science. As the institutionalized study of political sciences rapidly developed in the second half of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries distinctly separate disciplines within political sciences grew from the same root. One of these was political science of religion. This discipline reached the apex of its development at the moment religion entered the realm of politics through the wide open doors after the awakening of Islam in the second half of the past century. Today a section called Religion and Politics is one of the most important section of the American Political Sciences Association-APSA For more on this see [www.apsanet.org/~religionandpolitics](http://www.apsanet.org/~religionandpolitics) The curricula and teaching programs of virtually all US departments of political sciences include courses on political science of religion or religion and politics. For the first time on the entire territory of the Balkan Peninsula and East Europe, this discipline was introduced into the curriculum and teaching program of the Department of Political Sciences of the University of Belgrade in 1993 since which time it has been steadily growing in importance. At present virtually all departments of political sciences offer courses in this discipline. The development of this subject, political science of religion is best illustrated by the example of the University of Skopje in Macedonia. This university does not have a department of political sciences. However there is a Political Sciences Section at the Law School of the University of Skopje. Until last year this Section did not teach this subject. Today it teaches two courses in political science of religion. The significance attributed to this discipline is underlined by the fact that even institutions which have no connection with political sciences teach them. Thus, the School of Theology of the Catholic University in Zagreb has introduced two courses on religion as a political science in its curriculum, namely «Religion and Politics: Christianity and Islam» and «Religious fundamentalism: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.».

We can now see the connection between the constitution and religion in the constitutional and political systems established in the USA after the Declaration of Independence in 1776. However, religion did not play a significant role only during the creation of the state; it continued to play this role and still does. It is well known that the original 13 states created the United States of America and that through gradual expansion westward, towards the Pacific coast, the newly created state slowly took on its final form. During the conquest of the West, American pioneers frequently came into conflict not only with the autochthonous population—American Indians—but also with the French, the English and the Mexicans. The USA emerged victorious from these conflicts. However, negotiations and purchases also played an important role in the creation of the the USA as we know it today. What is less well known is the ideological foundation on which rested the subsequent westward expansion of the original 13 states. It is contained in the ideological teaching called “Manifest Destiny.” Manifest Destiny as a concept was created by a journalist called John L. O’Sullivan in 1845 during the Texas crisis. In an essay entitled “Annexation” O’Sullivan explained that the USA was compelled to annex Texas. This right to annex O’Sullivan justified by “the manifest destiny [of America] to overspread the continent.” At that time a dispute about Oregon arose between the USA and Great Britain, and “O’Sullivan believed that God (‘Providence’) had given the United States a mission to spread republican democracy (‘the great experiment of liberty’) throughout North America.. Because Great Britain would not use Oregon for the purpose of spreading democracy, thought O’Sullivan, British claims to the territory could be disregarded. O’Sullivan believed that Manifest Destiny was a moral ideal (a ‘higher law’) that superseded other considerations, including international laws and agreements”<sup>11</sup>. This was a popularly held belief among Americans<sup>12</sup>.

This teaching was predominant in political parties, lobby groups and, particularly, religious communities because religion was the foundation on which Manifest Destiny rests. The teaching of Manifest Destiny began to be used in practice by the adherents of “Jackson’s democracy,” or more exactly the adherents of the Democratic Party, who were

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifest\\_Destiny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifest_Destiny).

<sup>12</sup> De Tockville writes: “I do not know whether all American believe in God, for who knows what lies in the hearts of men, but I am convinced that they consider religion essential for the survival of republican institutions. [...] I saw Americans unite to send missionaries to new states in the West to found schools and churches; they fear that religion might get lost in those forests and that men born there would not be as free as those from whom they have descended. I have met rich inhabitants of New England who left their homes to go to the banks of the Missouri or to the prairies of Illinois where they would lay the foundations of Christianity and freedom. Thus in the United States piety is constantly rekindled on the hearths of patriotism. You may think that these people act in this way only because they have the hereafter in mind but you would be wrong: eternity is only one of their concerns. When you question these missionaries of Christian civilization, you will be surprised to hear that they frequently speak of the good things of earthly life and to find politicians where you thought you saw only believers. There is mutual solidarity among all American republics. They will tell you that if Western republics were to fall into anarchy or be subjugated by despotism, the republican institutions, which flourish on the Atlantic coast, would be threatened. It is, therefore, in our interest for new states to be pious and thus make possible for us to remain free.” Ibid. p.253-254.

inspired by the political philosophy of Andrew Jackson<sup>13</sup>. This happened in the fifties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was used to promote the US expansion over the territories of North America. The concept was revived after 1890, this time by the Republicans, as a theoretical justification of the US expansion beyond North America<sup>14</sup>.

As we can see from the above, religion played a huge role in the creation of the United States of America and it continues to do so today. It is certainly one of the most significant driving forces of the administration of George W. Bush<sup>15</sup>. But of particular importance is the fact that religion was a significant driving force also for Bush's competitors in the last elections. The vice presidential candidate of the Democratic Party, Joseph Lieberman, seems to be a deeply religious man and, fully aware of the religious card that Bush was going to play, he knew that he could compete only if he uses similar rhetoric. Trying to win the hearts of the voting public and knowing very well what the public likes and wants, he constantly repeated: "our founding fathers, authors of the Constitution consistently followed the precepts of the Bible"<sup>16</sup>. Knowing that the people wanted a religious president he said: "John Adams, the second president of the United States of America, wrote that our Constitution was written only for moral and religious people"<sup>17</sup>.

It is not very difficult to understand why this is so. An overwhelming majority of American voters are religious and church-oriented people in the literal sense of these words. This is confirmed by all current polls in the USA. The poll of the liberal CBS-New, for instance, shows that an overwhelming majority of Americans do not believe that man is a result of evolution; they believe that man is created by God. An even more important fact is that when Americans believe in evolution, they believe that the process of evolution was directed by God<sup>18</sup>.

This is precisely the reason why we shall analyze the influence of religion on the choice of the top man in the American administration. This analysis will make it easier

<sup>13</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifest\\_Destiny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifest_Destiny), исто.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> See for instance Harley Schlanger, *Fundamentalism in America*, *ELR, Executive Intelligence Review*, February 4, 2005, Washington.

<sup>16</sup> *Politika*, Belgrade, August 30, 2000, p.4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, 55% of Americans believe that God created man such as man is today, which means without an evolutionary process. Of these Americans 67% voted for Bush and 47% for Kerry. When we add to that those who believe in evolution, but evolution directed by God, then we see that 82% of Americans believe in the creationist theory, i.e they believe that God created man. In this last group, 28% voted for Kerry and 22% for Bush. In contrast to the believers, only 13% of Americans believe in evolution and deny the role of any divinity in the creation of man. This shows clearly how insignificant is the part of atheists in American society. So it is not surprising that 65% of Americans support the parallel teaching of creationism and evolution in school curricula, while 37% demand that evolution be not taught at all. Quoted from: Poll: Creationism Trumps Evolution, CBS News, NEW YORK, Nov. 22. 2004, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/11/22/opinion/polls/main657083.shtml>.

for us to understand the extent of this influence on the formulation of both home policy and foreign policies of a great power. No country in today's world can function properly without an understanding of the determinants of political practices in the USA because every country is to a greater or lesser degree dependent also on the decisions made by the USA.

We have already said that, judging by the text of the Constitution, religion cannot influence the choice of the head of state. Therefore in a purely legalistic sense it does not matter whether a presidential candidate is a religious man or an atheist, nor does it matter to which religious community he belongs. This is his private concern. On the other hand, if we remember the words of the second president, John Adams, that the Constitution which stipulates a secular system was made only for religious men, we shall see clearly that religion is being introduced through the back door into the most important area of public policy and thereby does violence to the secular nature of the state in a formal sense. Because, if those who are not religious cannot implement the Constitution, then clearly declared atheism of a presidential candidate will make it impossible for him to win in the elections although he cannot be formally forbidden to seek the candidacy<sup>19</sup>.

If we look at all the presidents since the birth of the American state in the light of the facts presented above, we can reach the following conclusion. So far the United States of America has had 43 presidents, including G. W. Bush. If we analyze the nexus between them and religion, in the light of the words of John Adams, we shall see that all 43 presidents of the USA followed some form of religious teaching within the Christian context<sup>20</sup>. We can therefore say that the voters took strict notice of what Adams had written, namely that according to the Constitution the state can be governed only by a religious man, a man inspired by religious morality<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, the system permitted atheism to exist, but the prevailing social climate placed an avowed atheist in a position where some of his civil rights were curtailed, as, for

<sup>19</sup> According to one poll only 49% of Americans would vote for a presidential candidate who is an atheist, while 59% declared that they would accept a homosexual president. David Plotz, *The Protestant Presidency: Why Jews, Mormons, and Catholics still can't get elected president*. Quoted from [www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com) February 11, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted from [http://www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html).

<sup>21</sup> Why this is so can best be seen in the following example. De Tocqueville describes a court trial which took place during his stay in America. It so happened that a witness was called who declared at the beginning of his testimony that he was an atheist. The judge refused to admit his testimony on the grounds that the testimony of a man who has "in advance destroyed faith which could have been placed in his words," could not be admitted. The judge's explanation was very characteristic of the situation. "The presiding judge remarked that he had never before met a man who did not believe in God; that faith in God is the confirmation of any testimony given before a court and that to his knowledge there was no Christian country which would allow the testimony of a man without any faith." Quoted from De Tocqueville, *ibid.* p. 254.

instance the right to bear witness before a court of law<sup>22</sup>. So it is quite clear why in an essentially democratic process of electing the head of state personal religious orientation of candidates is a necessary precondition without which no one can be sent to the White House.

The electoral process and the elections themselves are part of the prevailing political culture in America. The majority of American citizens learn about the basics of political culture not in classrooms, not in political parties but in religious communities. American political scientists specializing in religion point out that churches in America have become places where Americans can acquire skills necessary for participation in politics. It is there that the faithful learn how to give speeches, organize meetings and electoral campaigns. And all this is transformed into a political process. So that churches become "mini schools for teaching democratic practices"<sup>23</sup>. According to American analysts, "for many Americans who do not belong to any other organization churches are absolutely necessary to achieve broader democratic participation"<sup>24</sup>. As this participation and political activities are imbued with religious teaching it is quite clear that activists trained in this manner are quite incapable of proposing candidates for any function unless they are absolutely convinced that such candidates are deeply religious. In view of the fact that the above-mentioned poll showed that an enormous majority of Americans are religious, it is clear that all candidates must take account of this fact and that our description of the piety of presidents is quite logical.

It is important to look at the way religion influenced the confessional structure of presidents in view of the fact that American society is multiconfessional. We have shown that it is impossible for an atheist to become president of the United States of America and that thus far all American presidents have been Christian by religion. Since it is a universally known fact that Christianity is divided into several streams, it is important to see how this division is reflected in the confessional structure of American presidents. The USA is a mosaic of Protestant religious communities which came from Europe to America where these religious communities became even more numerous<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Even today, atheists in the USA feel threatened. That is why the Organization of American Atheists has been founded to fight for their rights. The president of the organization, Ellen Johnson, says: "We are told that if we do not recognize accepted rules we must leave the classroom, the baseball playing field, the court room. We cannot testify that we saw murder committed because we are not believed to tell the truth unless we believe in God. We are told: pray with the rest of us or leave! We are marginalized." Quoted from *Politika*, Belgrade, September 19, 2000, p.5 in "Potiskivanje ateista" [Repression of atheists].

<sup>23</sup> *Separation and Interaction*, ibid.

<sup>24</sup> ibid.

<sup>25</sup> According to American statistical information as regards the confessional structure of the US population which currently numbers 295,734,134 persons (estimate for July 2005), 56% are Protestant, 28% Roman Catholic, 10% are not religious, 2% are Jewish, and 4% belong to various other religions. Quoted from 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, edited by John W. Wright, p.699. As regards Protestant churches in the US, their structure is as follows: the largest is the Community of Baptist Churches whose congregations numbers 28,293,420 members; the community of Methodist Churches with its 13,090,542 members;



Also other Christian denominations came to the USA, of which the first were the Roman Catholics, then the Eastern Orthodox Christians, Jews and other religions. Many of these religious communities became extremely important in the political life of the USA, but one look at the confessional structure of American presidents will tell us that they were not successful in sending their candidates to the White House.

According to American statistical information of the total of 43 presidents the largest number came from the Episcopal Church<sup>26</sup>: George Washington, James Madison, James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, John Taylor, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, Chester A. Arthur, Theodore Roosevelt<sup>27</sup>, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Gerald Ford and the current president George W. Bush. As we can see, 12 American presidents in all were members of the Episcopal Church. No other religious community has given so many heads of state. This fact is important for many reasons. First, it shows how great was the influence of those who were of English origin both in social and political life of the country. In addition to the English language, which they brought with them and which became the „unofficial official“ language<sup>28</sup> they also brought the established church of their mother country. It is of interest to note that during the Revolutionary War the Anglican Church in America sided with London and was a kind of fifth column. As a result it was kept under surveillance, and many of its members were persecuted while others emigrated so that the Church virtually ceased to exist for a time<sup>29</sup>. After the Revolution, a small group of Episcopalians, who were loyal to the USA, revived the Church. The number of its members did not grow as quickly as did those who belonged to the churches whose loyalty to the Union was never in question. However, it is important to point out that the Episcopalians were very rich and influential people which fact compensated for their lack of numerical strength<sup>30</sup>. How great was the influence of everything connected with the cultural of England

---

the Community of Pentecostal Churches 11,326,188 members; the Lutheran Church 8,316,331; the Mormon Church 5,066,052 members; the Orthodox Church 4,013,497 members; Churches of Christ 3,451,052 members; the Presbyterian Church 4,114,350 members; the Episcopal Church 2,364,559; the Reformation Church 1,948,167 members; Jehovah's Witnesses 1,040,283; Adventists 866,081 members; Nazarenes 627,054; The Salvation Army 471,416; the Menonites 316,267 members; Churches of God 277,255 members; Quakers 186,280. Quoted from 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, ibid. p. 410-411.

<sup>26</sup> Episcopal Church is a name for the Anglican Church, which is the established church of England, on the territory of the USA. Quoted from: ibid p.409.

<sup>27</sup> Many sources state that Theodore Roosevelt was a member of the Reformed Dutch Church, but some state that he was also an Episcopalian. It is characteristic of American Protestants that many of them change several denominations during their lifetimes. Quoted from [http://www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html).

<sup>28</sup> It was only during the recent debate on illegal immigrants that American wider public became aware of the fact that there was no "official language" in the USA, although English language was considered as such until recently.

<sup>29</sup> 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, ibid, p.409.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



can be seen in the fact that the first president, George Washington, was a member of the Episcopal Church.

When the independence of the state was secure, and the Episcopal Church regained legitimacy, the strength of the Church became obvious. In spite of its numerical weakness as compared to the Methodists and later the Baptists, the citizens of the USA most frequently elected their presidents from among the members of the Episcopal Church. The fourth president, James Madison (1809-17) was again an Episcopalian. This was the final victory of Episcopalians in their struggle for political influence in the country. All that was negative in their past, everything they did during the struggle for independence was overshadowed by the economic, cultural and organizational strength of this Church. We know the outcome. Although numerically stronger and more committed to independence, as were for instance the Methodists, other denominations accepted the leadership of the Episcopalians and freely gave their support to Episcopalian candidates. So it was the latter who provided the greatest number of presidents—12—in the history of the USA. In spite of the rapid growth of the Baptist Church, until 1820 the Methodists were numerically the strongest denomination and remained so until 1920<sup>31</sup>. So 26.20% of the total number of US presidents came from among the ranks of the Episcopalians<sup>32</sup>. When we consider that the Episcopalians constitute only 1.49% of the total number of the church-going citizens of the USA and less than 1% of its total population, their influence on Washington's policy becomes very clear.

The denomination which gave the second highest number of US presidents is the Presbyterian Church. There have been 9 Presbyterian presidents: Andrew Jackson, James Knox Polk, Julius C. Grant, James Buchanan, Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison, Woodrow Wilson, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan<sup>33</sup>. So 21% of US presidents came from among the Presbyterians who constitute only 2.25% of the total number of church-going Americans<sup>34</sup> and even less of the total population.

The third place is shared by the three remaining Protestant denominations: Methodists, Baptists, and Unitarians. Each gave four presidents. Methodists were James Knox Polk, Julius Grant<sup>35</sup>, Rutherford B. Hayes, William McKinley and G. W. Bush the

<sup>31</sup> Quoted from the same source p. 407.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted from [http://www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html).

<sup>33</sup> Quoted from [http://www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.htm](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.htm).

<sup>34</sup> 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, ibid. p. 411.

<sup>35</sup> Sources show that some presidents belonged to two denominations. For instance Polk and Grant are described as being members of both the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches. This, we repeat, should not cause any concern as mobility from one denomination to another is an important characteristic of American Protestantism. Multiple denominational changes during a lifetime are not a rarity. Besides, the majority of new denominations have been founded by the dissidents of old denominations. One of the better

current president<sup>36</sup>. If we count Polk and Grant as Presbyterians, then we can see the strength of this religious community in the political life of the USA. The following presidents came from among the Baptists: Warren G. Harding, Harry S. Truman, Jimmy Carter and William Jefferson Clinton<sup>37</sup>. The case of the Baptists is very important for assessing the strength of various religious communities and their influence on the political life in the USA. Their roots go back to Europe. They came to America with their European Protestant tradition and as such they should have been an example to emulate<sup>38</sup>. They were predominant in the American south as early as the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and today they are the most numerous Protestant denomination constituting 18% of the total population<sup>39</sup>. Yet they gave America only four presidents. The Unitarians gave also only four presidents: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Millard Fillmore and William Howard Taft<sup>40</sup>. But in contrast to the Baptists, who gave us also only four presidents, the Unitarians constitute only 0.2% of the total US population<sup>41</sup>.

The next in order come these three religious communities: Disciples of Christ<sup>42</sup>, the Reformed Dutch Church and the Quakers. They gave us two presidents each. James A. Garfield and Lyndon B. Johnson were followers of the Disciples of Christ who number only 0.4% of the total population<sup>43</sup>. The followers of the Dutch Reformed Church were Martin Van Buren and Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was also known to be an Episcopalian<sup>44</sup>. The Dutch Reformed Church constitutes only 0.1% of the total population<sup>45</sup>. The quakers were Herbert Hoover and Richard M. Nixon. Quakers constitute 0.7% of the population.

---

known among the newer denominations, the Adventists, was founded by William Miller, a Baptist who preached the imminent Second Coming of Christ. When his predictions proved wrong, he was excommunicated by the Baptist Church and founded a new denomination which later became the Adventists as we know them now. Quoted from Ivan Cvitković, *Religije suvremenog svijeta* [Religions of the modern world]. Published by the Department of Political Sciences, University of Sarajevo and The World Conference on Religions for Peace. Sarajevo, 1999 p. 177.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted from [http://www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> The roots of the Baptists go back to the beginning of the 16th century. This fact shows that they are among the earliest and most significant Protestant sects. Quoted from 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, ibid, p.407.

<sup>39</sup> See : [http://www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html).

<sup>40</sup> See : [http://www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> In some analyses we find that Disciples of Christ gave three presidents.

<sup>43</sup> See [http://www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

The Congregationalists, a well-known Protestant sect, gave only one president<sup>46</sup>, although some data indicate that there were two Congregationalist presidents. The officially recognized Congregationalist in the White House was Calvin Coolidge. The Congregationalists represent only 0.6% of the total American population. There were three presidents who did not belong permanently to any specific denomination. These were: Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Jackson. As infants, Jefferson was baptized Episcopalian, Andrew Jackson Presbyterian and Abraham Lincoln Baptist<sup>47</sup>. So all three were actually Protestants. Finally, we have Roman Catholics who represent the most numerous religious community in the USA constituting 26% of the total population. Numerous though they were, they were successful in having only one president elected – John Fitzgerald Kennedy<sup>48</sup>.

The data presented above clearly show the influence of religion on political life. Questions raised by this fact are numerous. First, how is it possible that communities whose members could be counted on the fingers of one hand, as it were and who because of their paucity are virtually impossible to meet in the streets of the USA, can have such decisive influence on the formulation of policy of such a super power? Second, in a country where Protestants predominate, why is it that some Protestant sects produce more presidents than the others? Third, how is it possible that the denomination which is numerically the strongest of all denominations in the USA has succeeded in giving America only one president? Fourth, if the Jews are truly so influential in American political life, why could they not get even one president elected from among their numbers.

In the opinion of those, who in their analyses of relations between religion and politics follow the ideas of the Enlightenment, it is not possible to give answers to these questions. That is why European scholars, be it western or eastern, have generally speaking failed in treating this question properly because the Philosophers of the Enlightenment still rule in Europe where the question of religion is concerned<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> French educators, from Montesquieu (1689-1755) to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) thought that religion was caused by the lack of enlightenment and a low level of economic development, and that it would disappear with the growth of education and economic improvement. See for instance *Le.Petite Larousse*, Librairie Larousse, 11th ed. Paris, 1962. De Toquevill, who knew America, which at that time was the most democratic and economically advanced country, considered them wrong. He said: "The Philosophers of the 18th century were simply explaining the gradual weakening of religion. Religious zeal, they said, must burn out with increased freedom and enlightenment. The trouble is that the facts do not support the theory." (Quoted from De Toquevill, *ibid.* p. 255.) It is important to point out that de Toquevill was not just anybody. He was not only a scholar, he was also a renowned politician, vice president of the National Assembly and minister of foreign affairs. He was extremely well-known. His work quoted here appeared in several editions during his lifetime. Part I came out in 1835 and Part II in 1840. By 1848 the work appeared in 12 editions. It means that every French intellectual could see de Tocqueville's work and could compare his findings regarding the role

In our attempt to give answers to these questions we must first accept the following facts. The United States of America is a secular state and, as such, it is not tied to any particular religious denomination either by its constitutional, legislative or political systems. On the other hand, we must remember that all analyses have proved—and quite successfully so—that religion was a decisive influence in the past, and continues to be an influence, in political processes and elections to high offices in the administration. On the basis of the data presented earlier, we can say that all the US presidents have thus far been Christians. We can further say that all of them, with one exception, were Protestant. True, the exception was extremely notable, but nonetheless it was an exception. We have in mind John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1961-1963). But if at the time of his tenure it seemed to us that the Protestants' exclusive monopoly of the White House was at an end, time has proved us wrong. Because in the 43 years after Kennedy's death no Catholic was able to reach the White House, and the Protestant domination of it was reconfirmed. An even more interesting fact is that in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries religion has become an even more important factor in presidential campaigns than was the case 50 years ago. **“It was inconceivable that Nixon or Eisenhower would talk about their personal religion, but it is becoming de rigueur that a candidate do that today,” says John McGreevey a history professor at Notre Dame**<sup>50</sup>.

So, de Tocqueville's position that religion is in no way connected with the low level of economic development, the lack of education or political freedom has been proved absolutely right. The economic development of the USA during Eisenhower's presidency (1953-1961) was at considerably lower level than it is at present. The average annual income per capita was considerably lower, as was the level of education, but religion

---

of religion in society and politics with the positions taken by the Philosophers of the Enlightenment whom he criticized. Therefore, if time has proved de Tocqueville to be right, and that terrible mistakes had been made in the treatment of religion at the cost of hundreds of thousands of human lives (September 11, 2001; Palestinian crisis which has been going on since 1997; potential war with Iran with a threat of a nuclear catastrophe) then we would be justified in condemning the European intellectuals and politicians not only for not being able to see that de Tocqueville was right and that the Philosophers of the Enlightenment were wrong but also for everything that has happened and that unfortunately may yet happen. They are to blame because the solution was at hand, but they rejected it because of their delusions which were certainly have no basis on facts. De Tocqueville further says: "... because every day in France someone is trying to prove to me in very learned terms that in America everything is good except that very religious spirit that I so admire. So I learn that the only thing lacking for men to be free and happy on the other side of the Ocean is for them to start believing like Spinoza that this world is eternal and like Cabanis that thought is a secretion of the brain. Truly, I have nothing to add to that except to point out that those who speak thus have never been in America and have not yet seen either a religious people or a free people. I am, therefore, waiting for them to return from there." (Ibid p. 254) This quotation clearly shows that de Tocqueville was a man of religion. But even an atheist could see that de Tocqueville's analysis of religion as a fact which exists regardless of man's level of education or social standing, a fact which exerts a dominant and mathematically measurable influence on many important political processes, is correct and that anybody, including first of all the atheists, will make a terrible mistake if in their analyses they ignore the influence of religion on politics.

<sup>50</sup> David Plotz, The Protestant Presidency: Why Jews, Mormons, and Catholics still can't get elected president. From [www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com), 11.02.2000.

was a much less important factor in presidential campaigns than it today. **It means that the current higher level of economic development and political culture not only did not diminish the presence of religion in public life, it made it stronger.**

Therefore, to answer the first question we must start by adding up the numbers and confirm that Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Unitarians gave 24<sup>51</sup> presidents, or 56.7% of the total number of presidents of the only current super power in the world. On the other hand, these denominations, taken together, make up only 4,7% of the population. This means that “taking into account their numbers alone they they could be regarded as a statistical error”, and yet they are the ruling faction in the USA.

Even taking into account the fact that according to some sources we must be careful when quoting these numbers, because over the history of the USA these ratios were not always what they are today, some things are nevertheless quite clear. Here we have in mind the fact that these figures refer to the past 50 years or so. In that 50-year period the percentages referring to various religious communities do not differ greatly from today's. So even 50 years ago the numerical strength of the three religious communities in question was as inconsiderable then as now, and yet they gave us four out of ten presidents who were in office in that period. So nearly 40% of all presidents came from a group constituting only 5% of the total population of the USA<sup>52</sup>.

This means that the strength of these religious communities enabled them to “convince” the followers of other denominations, who together represent 95% of the population, to vote for their candidates. The answer to why this could happen is given by David Plotz, an American analyst: „**Protestantism is America's normal religion practiced by 60 percent of the population. Americans are more familiar with Protestant language and concepts than Jewish or Catholic ones**“<sup>53</sup>. So the answer is obvious. To be American means to be Protestant. This is the essence of the answer; this is why American voters, who are Protestants themselves, vote for their coreligionists. When the question arises as to why these three religious communities specifically, rather than any other, the answer is also clear. It was the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians who have created the USA—Episcopalians in particular because they represented the culture of England which founded the colonies from which the USA emerged.

And even if we remember that some Episcopalians as followers of the Episcopalian Church, which was the Church of England, had collaborated with the English army in

<sup>51</sup> At least. Because of the tendency to change religions which we have mentioned before it could be argued that there were 25 presidents. From: [www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html).

<sup>52</sup> Dwight Eisenhower (1953-61); Gerald Ford (1974-77); Ronald Reagan (1981-89); George H. Bush (1989-93). If we add George W. Bush who started his life as an Episcopalian, then the number of presidents from these three denominations is five, which means that 50% of all presidents in the relevant period came from a group representing only 4.7% of the total population.

<sup>53</sup> David Plotz, *ibid*.

the Revolutionary War, we must not forget that other Episcopalians did actually create the USA. One of them was George Washington, commander of the American liberation army and the first president of the the new state. The third president of the USA, Thomas Jefferson (1801-09) was baptized in infancy as Episcopalian. The fourth and the fifth presidents were also Episcopalians: James Madison (1809-17) and James Monroe (1817-25). The USA would not exist today but for the Revolutionary War, and the Revolutionary War was fought and won by the Episcopalians. They are the symbol of the USA. The case of the Unitarians is similar. The second president, John Adams (1797-1801) and his son John Quincy Adams (1825-29), the sixth president, were Unitarians<sup>54</sup>.

The answer to the second question was partially given in the answer to the first question. First, the three religious communities in question were most important in shaping the American cultural and religious model. Second, being the leaders of the intelligentsia, they were able to endow their adherents with considerable economic power. Thus religious affiliation as the cultural and civilizational foundation was united with economic power. The third important reason is found in the fact that the Quakers, as pacifists, were against the Revolutionary War. This does not mean that they were against the USA. But as the USA could not be created without armed struggle against the British colonial authority, and the Quakers could not participate in this armed struggle, it was logical that their influence during the Revolutionary War and immediately afterwards was considerably weaker than the influence of those who were active in the struggle<sup>55</sup>. The case of the Baptists is very interesting. As we have seen they are numerically the largest religious community of American Protestants. And yet, they gave America only four of its presidents: Warren G. Harding (1921-23); Harry S. Truman (1945-53); Jimmy Carter (1977-81) and Bill Clinton (1993-201)<sup>56</sup>. Reasons why in spite of their numerical strength the Baptists produced so few presidents are the following. First of all, at the time the USA came into being they were virtually non-existent in America as a religious community. Their numbers began to rise only in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This fact is the reason why they could not build their political capital when they should have done. They were successful in expanding in the USA, which was created mainly by Episcopalians, Unitarians and Presbyterians, and they considered that they owed gratitude to these three groups for a society which guaranteed religious freedom without which their group could not have developed so successfully. The second reason, and a very important one,

<sup>54</sup> [www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html). ; 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, ibid p.96-97.

<sup>55</sup> So, for instance, Richard Nixon (1969-74) as a Quaker was under an obligation not to use violence against others. For this reason he served in WWII in non-combatant troops. Quoted from 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record* ibid, p.106. On the other hand, as president and commander-in-chief, it was his constitutional obligation to use armed force in the war in Vietnam which he had inherited from Lyndon Johnson. This illustrated the specific implementation of theological dogmas in the USA.

<sup>56</sup> [www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html).

was the fact that they insisted on stricter separation between State and Church. It is a characteristic of the Baptist Church as all who are well acquainted with American religious climate point out<sup>57</sup>. This separation inevitably separated the Baptists from politics as well in a certain sense of the word, as the insistence on the separation of the State from the Church had to have some effect on the attitudes of members of this religious community towards politics in general.

Another important factor which can explain why there were so few American presidents who were Baptists is the fact that this religious movement first developed in the American south. And even today, it is in the south that the Baptists, whether black or white, are the most numerous<sup>58</sup>. The Civil War, which was fought between the North and the South, found the Baptists firmly on the side of the southern system of values which includes slavery. This fact led to the split between the southern Baptists from the northern Baptists<sup>59</sup>. After the Civil War, the defeat of the South meant also the defeat of the Baptists. The Southerners were excluded from the higher echelons of the administration. It was perfectly natural that this exclusion applied particularly to the office of presidency. In addition, the Civil War left the south greatly impoverished<sup>60</sup>. So that later, when these barriers against the Southerners were lifted the effects which they had produced could not be easily removed. Consequently, in political life the Baptists were left lagging behind the less numerous religious denominations. So they accepted the political leadership of these lesser denominations and in the spirit of Protestant solidarity they supported them in elections<sup>61</sup> guided by the principle that it is better to go with the Protestants, who one day may become Baptists, than to go with Roman Catholics who were rapidly gaining in numerical strength<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, мсто, стр. 407.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 81. Only in 1995, did the Southern Baptist Convention vote that slavery was a sin and decide to ask the blacks for forgiveness for considering slavery and racial segregation justified. Quoted from *Večernje novosti*, Belgrade, July 9, 1995. P. 8.

<sup>60</sup> The novel by Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* is a wonderful source of information on this question. How great that poverty was can best be seen from a biography of Jimmy Carter. He lived in a house where there was no running water until 1935, or electricity until 1938. Quoted from *Glas javnosti*, Belgrade, February 18, 2001, p. 13. To put this in perspective we should note that even some villages in Serbia had electricity at that time.

<sup>61</sup> For instance, Lyndon Johnson, a follower of Christ's Disciples, a sect which represents only 0,4% of the total US population, was a Southerner from Texas and was elected as John Kennedy's vice president. Kennedy justified his choice of vice president by his need to overcome the hostility of the Protestant South towards a Roman Catholic candidate. Quoted from *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2002*. World Almanac Books, p.554.

<sup>62</sup> Over the past several decades, the number of Roman Catholics in the USA has been steadily increasing due to the growing numbers of immigrants from South and Central America. If this trend continues, the Roman Catholics, who are at present the most numerous religious community in America in relative terms, will have absolute majority. These new American immigrants are concentrating in the southern states of the USA as these states are the closest to their countries of origin. However, the South has so far been the exclusive preserve of the Baptists. As a result, the share of Hispanics in the total population of the USA, which in 1990 was 9%, ten years later rose to 12.5%. Quoted from 2006 *The New York Times ALMANAC, The Almanac of Record*, ibid, p.276.



The third question concerns the Roman Catholics. In answering this question one must first consider the numerical strength of the Roman Catholics. Then one must consider the fact that, although they are numerically the largest religious community in America in relative terms, they do not have absolute majority and need the help of Protestants in order to have their candidates elected. In other words a Roman Catholic cannot be elected president without the support of the Protestants. The Protestants, however, are unwilling to support a Roman Catholic candidate as is confirmed by history and by the fact that John F. Kennedy did openly recognize the hostility of certain groups of voters based entirely on his Roman Catholicism and their Protestantism.

This fact is central to the question we are considering. The origin of Protestantism is very well known. It was born in a blood-drenched conflict with Vatican<sup>63</sup>. Hence the long-established mutual hatred of the adherents of these two factions. The essence of inter-religious relations in Germany is most aptly described in Goethe's words during a conversation with Eckermann. "The Catholics cannot be trusted. We have witnessed the hardships of two million Protestants under the five-million majority of the Catholics in Ireland. The Catholics always stand together when a Protestant is to be attacked. They are like a pack of hounds which, as soon as you show them a stag, will throw itself upon the beast<sup>64</sup>.

While the mutual hatred between the Roman Catholics and Protestants weakened in Europe as a concomitant of the general weakening of religion, this was not the case in the USA where neither religion nor intolerance towards the Roman Catholics weakened<sup>65</sup>. As was mentioned earlier, it was precisely this fact that made it necessary for John F. Kennedy to take Lyndon Johnson, a Protestant, for his running mate in order to counteract the negative political propaganda.

The famous journalist Walter Cronkite, who covered Kennedy's presidential campaign, always raised the question of Kennedy's religious affiliation, knowing very well that he was a Roman Catholic and that American voters were highly intolerant of Roman Catholicism. Kennedy was so annoyed by this that he asked Cronkite's bosses to

<sup>63</sup> In the Thirty Year War (1618-1648) alone, which was waged between Protestants and Roman Catholics, Germany lost 40% of its total population. Quoted from *Ilustrovana istorija sveta od praistorije do danas*, Stvarnost, Zagreb, Prosveta, Belgrade, 1970, p. 116.

<sup>64</sup> Goethe, April 7, 1829, to Eckermann, quoted here from Nikola Živković, *Kako nas drugi vide, Slika Srba u nemackim medijima 1990-2000* [How others see us: the Serbs in the German media], Prometej, Novi Sad, 2003, p. 213.

<sup>65</sup> This fact was so widespread that it is evident even in films such as *Missisipi Burning*, the objective of which was to spread political correctness. The film deals with a situation in a southern American town in the Mississippi valley in the 60s of the 20th century. At one point we hear the mayor of the town say: "We hate Communists and the Pope." Had anyone said that in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia he would have been immediately arrested for spreading religious hatred. This film shows how the mayor is elected by the will of the citizens whom he tells not that he disagrees with the Pope but that he hates him. And virtually his entire audience applauds affirming that they also hate the Pope.

replace him because he took every mention of his religion as an open invitation to the Protestant voters to vote against him<sup>66</sup>.

In the name of political correctness the cultural policy of the USA tries through artistic clichés to create relations in which religious differences are irrelevant. Referring to this fact, David Plotz says: "The president on the TV show *The West Wing* is even Catholic. But life is not imitating art. Though non-Protestant comprise at least 35 percent of the American population, Kennedy remains the only one ever elected president. And of the 14 major party nominees since Kennedy's death, only Michael Dukakis was not Protestant<sup>67</sup>." In 2000 Plotz wrote that the attitude towards Roman Catholics, although formally less intolerant among the Protestant masses, has remained unchanged at least as their voting habits are concerned. As explanation of this fact, the analysts who are concerned with inter-religious relations offer reasons other than religious prejudices. So they say that polls in 1958 showed that 27% of those polled said that they would not vote for a Roman Catholic as compared to only 4% in 1999<sup>68</sup>. Seeing that election results do not confirm the findings of the polls, the analysts say: "**probably people say that they are more tolerant than they actually are**"<sup>69</sup>. Their striving to be politically correct is becoming a serious burden for American analysis whose conclusions conflict with the the information they give. For instance, on the one hand they say: In recent campaigns, non-Protestant candidates did not lose because of religion<sup>70</sup>," and, on the other, they give explanations which are at odds with their statements. For instance, Plotz quotes John Green, director of University of Akron's Bliss Institute: "A Catholic can only get elected president by talking like a Protestant"<sup>71</sup>. Green speaks explicitly in religious terms. But Plotz concludes that reasons for this are not religious prejudices. The question we must ask is simple: if the reasons are not religious, then what are they?

Finally, the fourth question is concerned with the position of the Jews. What is the reason that there has never been a Jewish President of the USA in spite of so many headlines in American and world press which claim that it is actually the Jews who rule in America?

First of all, the very fact that in spite of formal equality of religious denominations there has not been a single Jewish President of the USA proves with mathematical exactitude that the story about the Jews being the real rulers of the USA is wrong. The only thing that is true and that also can be proved with mathematical exactitude

<sup>66</sup> Cronkite wrote about this in his memoirs. Quoted from *Naša Borba*, December 28, 1996, p. 7., Belgrade.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted from David Plotz, *ibid*.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*.

is that the presence of the Jews in the American political life is in inverse proportion to their numerical strength. It is equally true that to say that the Jews are rulers of America is nonsense as the facts about possible and actual presidents of the USA show. How do we explain this? Very simply. Some Christians have a very strongly developed feeling of anti-semitism, and that is particularly true of among American Protestants. This fact is not concealed, but given the prevalent political correctness mentioned earlier there is an effort to minimize it and not make it very obvious. This could have a harmful effect on the political life of America because every concealment of a sickness can lead to catastrophic consequences.

So Plotz, whom we have mentioned before, says that in 1937 46% of polled Americans admitted publicly that they would not vote for a Jewish presidential candidate. He adds that by 1999 the situation had changed to the point where 92% of polled voters said they would vote for a Jew and only 6% said they would not<sup>72</sup>. In spite of such favorable results the polls were not confirmed by political reality. The explanation for this discrepancy was given by President Jimmy Carter who said that he was appalled by the statement of the leader of the Southern Baptists that God does not hear the prayers of the Jews.<sup>73</sup> We must believe Jimmy Carter's words as he confirmed them by his actions: in October 2000 he left the Southern Baptists<sup>74</sup>. Of course, there may have been additional reasons for his leaving.

We ask ourselves: what is more important, the statement of Jimmy Carter or the statement of his religious leader whom the overwhelming majority of his congregation did not abandon but stayed with him?

If we add that George W. Bush told a Houston reporter that "the paradise is open only to those who have accepted Christ"<sup>75</sup>, and the Jews do not accept Christ, then we see things in a different light. Obviously this statement does not refer only to Jews but to all non-Christians—Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians, Shintoists and, of course, Jews. Consequently, this is not an antisemitic message. This is a message of a sincere believer. Of course, degrees of piety differ from believer to believer and from religion to religion. Obviously, there is a wide choice of religions, and each of them offers salvation in one way or another. Consequently, if a religion possesses the plenitude of truth, it goes without saying that other religions do not, and, therefore, they are not true religions from the point of view of sincere believers. A believer chooses a religion because he believes that it only can save him from eternal death and tortures of hell. Therefore it is quite logical that true believers say what Bush said.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> *Politika* December 22, 1996, Belgrade, p.5.

<sup>74</sup> [www.adherents.com/adh\\_presidents.html](http://www.adherents.com/adh_presidents.html)

<sup>75</sup> Kinsley Michael, The Gospel according to George W Bush, July 24, 1999, <http://www.slate.com/id/32438/>.

However, in America most numerous non-Christians are Jews, and that is why this message was received as an antisemitic message. And although it was not essentially anti-semitic, there is no doubt that Christian fundamentalists cannot accept that those who reject Christ are right, nor can they accept them as role models and choose them as their leaders in this life.

When discussing the relation between the function of the President of the USA and religion we come to the present point in time, which is essential for understanding the policy of Washington either by Americans or the rest of the world. It is important to point out that according to all analyses this administration is one of the most religious, if not the most religious, of all administrations in America's history. George W. Bush declared that "Jesus Christ is the philosopher who has influenced him more than any other"<sup>76</sup>. Serious analysts of American policy took an early note of this fact. If Jesus Christ is indeed the chief inspiration for the policy of the US president, then it is clear that if we want to understand American policy and to predict Bush's behavior we must first verify whether his statement is true. The easiest way to do this would be to analyze the biographies of the president and his collaborators and then analyze the body of voters which had the decisive influence on the election of this administration, as well as the extent to which the voters' demands were met by the administration.

To this end, we should remember what William Montgomery, former US ambassador in Belgrade, said after the re-election of George W. Bush: "As we all know now the re-election of **Bush was in a large part the result of concentrated efforts of the religious right** in the United States of America"<sup>77</sup>. Montgomery further writes: "[...] President Bush presents himself as an Evangelical in word and deed. **Under his leadership the separation between the church and the state in the US has become obscured...** His 'crusade' against terrorism is founded on his religious conviction that he is on a 'mission of God' ... He will continue on his way, serene in his knowledge that God is with him"<sup>78</sup>.

That Bush is a very religious man is not the opinion only of the authors quoted here. There are many others who are of the same opinion<sup>79</sup>.

Having established this fact we must establish what is at the core of the convictions of those among the Republican voters who were chiefly instrumental in getting Bush

<sup>76</sup> David Plotz, *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> William Montogemry, "Do two Americas truly exist?", in *Danas*, November 13-14, 2004, Belgrade

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> For instance, Justin A. Frank, psychoanalyst and professor of psychiatry at the George Washington University in his book *Bush on the Couch: Inside the Mind of the President*, Harper Collins, 2004; then Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2003; *The Faith of George W. Bush: Christian Supremacy, American Imperialism and Global Disaster*, <http://www.christianaggression.org/>.

elected and who represent about one quarter of the US population<sup>80</sup>. They are the so-called Evangelical Christians who **proudly call themselves Christian fundamentalists**<sup>81</sup>. A very significant part of Fundamentalists believe, as do all Christians, in the Second Coming of Christ. But in contrast to the majority they believe that the period when the Second Coming became imminent began in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to their belief, formulated by the defrocked Anglican priest, John Nelson Darby, the precondition of Christ's Second Coming is that all the Jews of the world will be united in Israel. After this will follow the apocalypse and the final clash of good and evil. The wicked shall perish. Only the Darbyites will be saved by being bodily assumed into heaven and thus spared the horrors of the destruction of the world<sup>82</sup>.

These Fundamentalists, having successfully achieved the election of Bush who himself deeply believes in Christian dogmas, now demand from the administration to devote the entire foreign policy to this end. This means, peace must be achieved in the Middle East, first of all in Israel, so that the Jews can return to Palestine and their predictions be fulfilled. The fact that the chief opponent of this policy is the Islamic world is a complicating factor in the Middle East crisis. The Balkans, on the other hand, are a part of the problem because of their numerous Muslim population.<sup>83</sup> Besides, the late Prime Minister Djindjić admitted in his last interview that he raised the question of Kosovo and Metohija precisely because he was aware of these facts.<sup>84</sup>

We shall end by saying simply the following: if Bush himself, when asked who was his favorite political philosopher, instead of Habermas, Rawls, Marx, Luhman etc. named Jesus Christ as the philosopher who influenced him most and stated

<sup>80</sup> David Plotz, *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> In sharp contrast to the Muslims who are angered when called fundamentalists. Regarding the concept of fundamentalism see Miroljub Jevtić, *Od Islamske deklaracije do verskog rata u BiH* [From The Islamic Declaration to a religious war in B&H, Filip Višnjić, Belgrade, 1993, p.12.

<sup>82</sup> Harley Schlanger, *Fundamentalism in America*, EIR, February 4, 2005, Washington.

<sup>83</sup> The author of this paper was very surprised when he discovered in a conversation with a Czech diplomat responsible for matters connected with the Middle East that according to the classification of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Balkans belong to the Middle East. Considering the strength and size of the Czech Republic it does not seem likely that this classification reflects an independent opinion of the Czech government.

<sup>84</sup> In this connection he said: "[...] there was a risk that on the tide of the Iraqi crisis and fully predictable deterioration in the relations between the West and the Muslim and Arab countries we as a country as a whole and with the problem of Kosovo and Metohija in particular become someone's bargaining chip. [There is] a risk that some will fall into temptation to use Kosovo and Metohija as proof that they are not against all Muslims but only against Saddam Hussein. For this reason, I did everything I could in my recent initiatives to have the question of Kosovo and Metohija considered together with the question of Iraq. My intention was to show the world that we are no one's bargaining chip to be held in reserve for paying one's debts." Quoted from: Djuro Bilbija and Radmila Ognjanović, "Srbija nije žeton za plaćanje dugova" *Večernje novosti*, March 3, 2003, p.2. We think it is important to remember that Djindjić's behavior changed when he came to power and that he began to be concerned with Kosovo and Metohija only towards the end of his life. The author of this paper spoke about this with Djindjić in the summer of 2000 and acquainted him with these facts as they were presented in the book by Alexandre Del Valle *Guerres contre l'Europe: Bosnie-Kosovo-Tchetcheniev*, ed. Syrtès, 2000, p.305.

that his political conduct is in accordance with his Christian convictions, even at the risk of alienating his most important allies,<sup>85</sup> then, clearly, it would be impossible to understand the policy of the United States of America without the knowledge of Christian religion and particularly of Protestant religious communities in America whose teaching President Bush accepts as the true message of Christ. It is necessary, therefore, to know the theology of these religious communities, their structure and their psychology. From that point of view it is crystal clear that without political science of religion one cannot understand today's political life in the USA. It is also crystal clear that the assessments of American policy of all those who do not take into account these facts will be fundamentally wrong and will do irreparable damage to science as well as to the politics of relations with Washington<sup>86</sup>.

---

<sup>85</sup> This rhetoric has become so blatant and burdensome for the policy of American allies towards the Muslims, that even the German President Johannes Rau found himself forced to react: "The German President Johannes Rau finds that the American President George Bush is 'the victim of grandiose misunderstanding' when he speaks of a mission of God which led him to declare war on Iraq." Quoted from "Sadam heroј, Buš a misionari" [Sadam a hero, Bush a missionary] in *Blic*, Belgrade April 2, 2003, p.7

<sup>86</sup> From the above quoted statement of William Montgomery we can clearly see that even he, who should have had all the necessary information, could not predict what would happen. He said: "As we all know now..."

### **Summary**

**Miroљub Jevtić**

#### **POSITION OF PRESIDENT AND RELIGION WITHIN POLITICAL SYSTEM OF USA**

There were 43 presidents in the history of USA and the analysis of their religious affiliation suggests that a membership in a particular religious denomination has tremendous influence on the American political life. Roman Catholics, for example, comprise a relatively largest denominational community in the US yet despite their 28% share of the religious affiliation only one president ever emerged from that community - John F. Kennedy (1961-1963). By contrast, the three Protestant denominations - Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Unitarians – have 22 of the American presidents yet they comprise 4% of American religious affiliation. This discrepancy itself is sufficient to suggest that a powerful connection exists between religion and politics in the United States.

**Key words:** USA presidents, Religion, Protestantism, Politics.

### **Резиме**

**Мирољуб Јевтић**

#### **ФУНКЦИЈА ПРЕДСЕДНИКА И РЕЛИГИЈА У ПОЛИТИЧКОМ СИСТЕМУ САД**

САД су настале као резултат борбе усељеника из разних, пре свега европских, земаља за политичке али и верске слободе. И то је био један од покретачких мотива америчког рата за независност. Стога су САД створене као нека врста федерације разних протестантских верских заједница, којима су се прикључили и римокатолици јер су и они бежали од верске нетолеранције англиканске цркве. Религија је зато играла и игра велику улогу у историји ове земље. Функција председника као главног представника администрације и њена веза са религијом најбољи је доказ за то.

**Кључне речи:** САД председници, религија, протестантизам, политика.