

**AMERICAN THEOCRACY: THE PERIL AND POLITICS OF  
RADICAL RELIGION, OIL, AND BORROWED MONEY IN THE  
21ST CENTURY<sup>1</sup>**

REVIEWED BY MAJOR BRUCE D. PAGE, JR.<sup>2</sup>

If recent polls are to be believed, most Americans think the United States is headed in the wrong direction.<sup>3</sup> Kevin Phillips numbers himself among that majority and in his latest book, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century*, tells his readers why. Phillips believes that America's superpower status is jeopardized by: national oil policy that is steeped in deceit, coupled with an unsustainable national oil consumption rate; excessive influence of conservative Christianity on governmental affairs; and unprecedented levels of private and public borrowing. He argues from history, contending that the world's greatest empires have fallen due in large measure to some variant of one or more of these national sins. Over the course of 394 pages, Phillips provides readers an enormous amount of statistical and anecdotal evidence in support of his thesis. Unfortunately, he invests almost as much energy in unnecessarily charged rhetoric and anti-Christian invective. This open bias costs him credibility, such that his book, while still highly thought provoking, comes across more as political diatribe than reasoned scholarship.

The book opens with an analysis of how problematic America's oil consumption habits have become. Phillips provides considerable evidence that with global oil production likely to peak within thirty

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<sup>1</sup> KEVIN PHILLIPS, *AMERICAN THEOCRACY: THE PERIL AND POLITICS OF RADICAL RELIGION, OIL, AND BORROWED MONEY IN THE 21ST CENTURY* (2006).

<sup>2</sup> U. S. Air Force. Written while assigned as a student, 55th Judge Advocate Officer Graduate Course, The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, U.S. Army, Charlottesville, Virginia. The author wishes to thank Major Jeremy Ball for his helpful comments and suggestions offered during the writing of this review.

<sup>3</sup> Zogby International, *Bush Job Approval Hits 41%—All time Low; Would Lose to Every Modern President; Public Rates All Levels of Government Poorly in Katrina Handling; Red Cross Rated Higher Than Federal Government, 69%-17%—New Zogby America Poll* (Sept. 7, 2005), available at <http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.dbm?ID=1020> (Zogby International polling data indicating fifty-three percent of Americans believe the "nation [is] headed in the wrong direction"); Ruy Teixeira, *Public Opinion Watch* (Oct. 26, 2005), available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2005/10/b1138571.html> (citing a Survey USA report that found that, "In not a single state do 50% of adults think the country is headed in the right direction.").

years, possibly sooner,<sup>4</sup> American oil consumption is quickly outstripping worldwide supply.<sup>5</sup> The outlook is, in Phillips's estimation, bleak: long-established individual patterns of behavior are unlikely to change,<sup>6</sup> and the government is too beholden to entrenched oil interests ("Big Oil" executives<sup>7</sup>) to take any meaningful action. Like Britain a century ago and, to a lesser extent, eighteenth-century Holland, America is at a pivotal crossroads: though oil consumption is foundational to modern American culture and wealth, and though the nation's oil infrastructure represents an enormous capital investment not easily or cheaply replaced, our oil culture may soon become an albatross around our necks, dragging down the economy of a nation that refuses to modernize.<sup>8</sup>

Phillips adeptly brings statistics to bear in arguing that America is too oil-thirsty,<sup>9</sup> and his analysis of the psychological phenomenon of national nostalgia regarding the oil industry<sup>10</sup> is quite interesting. But he overlooks the critical fact that America has already successfully shifted from pre-oil fuel sources to oil, without significant economic disruption. Phillips offers no reason why America's transition from oil dependence to renewable energy sources will be unsuccessful, particularly given the level of national attention the issue is receiving.<sup>11</sup> Thus, while

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<sup>4</sup> PHILLIPS, *supra* note 1, at 21-25.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 90. "[I]n 1998 the United States for the first time . . . imported more than half of the petroleum it consumed." *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 54. Americans, who "constitute the world's most intensive motoring culture," *id.* at 33, "cling to and defend an ingrained fuel habit. . . . The hardening of old attitudes and reaffirmation of the consumption ethic since [the 1980s] may signal an inability to turn back." *Id.* at 54.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 95.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 17. Americans have been "slow to grasp the possibility that a steep price might have to be paid for the graying temples of what had been a pioneering fuel culture and infrastructure." *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *See, e.g., id.* at 60-61, where Phillips explains the phenomenon of "micropolitan" development with its attendant increase in national fuel consumption.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 52-54. Oil and gas "[m]useums are proliferating, especially in the leading energy states, gathering what Europeans might call the detritus of empire . . ." *Id.* at 52.

<sup>11</sup> While critics maintain (perhaps with justification) that the federal government is not yet doing enough, or is misapplying its efforts, *see* Justin Blum, *Bill Wouldn't Wean U.S. Off Oil Imports*, WASH. POST, July 26, 2005, at A1, the question of *whether* America needs to move toward renewable energy has been definitively answered in the affirmative at the national level. Both the executive and legislative branches are grappling with potential solutions to America's need to find viable non-fossil fuel energy sources. In announcing his "Advanced Energy Initiative," the President said, "The best way to break [our oil] addiction is through technology. Since 2001, we have spent nearly \$10 billion to develop cleaner, cheaper, and more reliable alternative energy sources—and we are on

overconsumption is unquestionably an important environmental, social, and even moral concern, Phillips's worries regarding dramatic oil shortages seem somewhat overwrought. This observation becomes important in judging Phillips's larger claim that access to foreign oil, increasingly a concern of presidents over the last half century,<sup>12</sup> is now the driving purpose for much of American foreign policy, including George W. Bush's decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003.

Here, Phillips pulls no rhetorical punches. Having accused Bush's "White House [of] misrepresentations . . . and incompetence,"<sup>13</sup> he asserts that the 2003 invasion of Iraq was "deceit cloaked"<sup>14</sup> and that official denials of the war's having been oil-motivated were "all but lies."<sup>15</sup> Instead, Phillips insists that Operation Iraqi Freedom was but "one hundred years of petro-imperialism in the Persian Gulf . . . come to a head."<sup>16</sup>

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the threshold of incredible advances." President George W. Bush, 2006 State of the Union Address (Jan. 31, 2006). *See also* Energy Policy Act of 2005, Pub. L. No. 109-58, 119 Stat. 594 (dealing extensively with renewable energy sources and creating energy consumption reduction initiatives).

<sup>12</sup> PHILLIPS, *supra* note 1, at 37-57. In these pages, Phillips reviews the oil policies of every American president from Dwight Eisenhower to Bill Clinton, excluding John F. Kennedy. With the exception of his excoriation of President George H. W. Bush, Phillips's judgments are fair. He describes events following the first Gulf War as follows:

Once military power had secured Middle Eastern oil supplies again, television news clips showed the forty-first president roaring along the Maine coast at the wheel of his rakish high-speed Cigarette boat, *Fidelity*. The broader symbolism leaped out: guilty complexes and hair shirts were gone, and with a Texas Republican at the helm the United States was back to practicing gunboat diplomacy and taking what it wanted.

*Id.* at 56. That Phillips could view the first Gulf War—after which the elder Bush was almost universally hailed as a hero for his success in leading a broad international coalition in repelling a dictator's illegal incursion into a sovereign nation—as the United States' "taking" anything strains credulity. His words at this early point in the book set the tone for the pages that follow.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at 62.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at 87.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 69.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 70.

This contention detracts from the book's better argued points. Phillips imputes guilt by association<sup>17</sup> and strains to find external support<sup>18</sup> for his belief that the 2003 Iraq war was "at bottom about access to oil and U.S. global supremacy."<sup>19</sup> Notwithstanding negative findings by independent investigators,<sup>20</sup> denials by high-ranking government spokespersons,<sup>21</sup> and current efforts to free the United States from dependence on oil, particularly foreign oil,<sup>22</sup> American oil imperialism becomes a thread Phillips weaves throughout the remainder of the book.

This imperialism, though, is not only economically motivated. In Part II of the book, Phillips argues that America's "powerful religiosity" and "biblical worldview" have led to a "crusader mentality ill fitt[ing] a great power decreasingly able to bear the rising economic costs of strategic and energy supply failure."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Phillips methodically recounts for his readers Britain's imperial ambitions in the post-World War I Middle East, as well as how Western governments, to include the United States, have supported and even attempted coups in the Persian Gulf region. *Id.* at 70-72. He stoops to intellectual sleight of hand, however, in his attempt to prove an unbroken chain of British-American efforts spanning the last hundred years. Beyond pointing out that Washington and London "cooperated" to arm Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, *id.* at 74, Phillips offers no factual evidence of the United States' complicity in British endeavors. Instead, he is content to employ repeated use of the term "Anglo-American," *id.* at 76, leaving his readers to infer a connection between the two nations' efforts.

<sup>18</sup> Phillips asserts that shortly after the 2003 Iraq invasion, "old hands with good memories harked back to 1973" when "Henry Kissinger and others . . . [had] promoted, just short of openly, a plan for using U.S. airborne forces to seize the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi." *Id.* at 41. These "old hands" "began to talk of a 'Thirty Years War' over Middle Eastern Oil." *Id.* In attempting to prove that a different administration's invasion of a different country using different tactical means than those allegedly promoted by Kissinger and others was but a delayed implementation of a long-plotted Republican goal, Phillips offers little beyond the opinions of a former diplomat, fired in the 1970s, whose conclusions can, at best, be described as questionable. *Id.* at 41 n.23 (citing Robert Dreyfuss, *The Thirty-Year Itch*, MOTHER JONES, Mar.-Apr. 2003, at 40).

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at 69.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 74 n.16. Phillips dismisses U.S. Congressional and British judicial inquiries as "lackluster." *Id.* at 74.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 69 (quoting White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, who "insisted on February 6, 2003, that 'if this had anything to do with oil, the position of the United States would be to lift the sanctions so the oil could flow. This is not about that. This is about saving lives by protecting the American people.'").

<sup>22</sup> See *supra* note 11.

<sup>23</sup> PHILLIPS, *supra* note 1, at 262.

The “religiosity” Phillips decries is found amongst “conservative fundamentalists”<sup>24</sup> generally, but is most embodied in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).<sup>25</sup> Phillips traces how the SBC, formerly a small sect but now the largest Protestant denomination in America, has benefited from a national increase in religious conservatism to become the “unofficial state church in Dixie”<sup>26</sup> and a major force in Republican politics. His sociological argument, which he supports with numerous statistical references, graphs, and diagrams, is provocative: according to Phillips, the setback to Southern culture the Civil War caused has been more than overcome by a “Second Reconstruction”<sup>27</sup> whereby “‘Southern’ no longer refer[s] to a region but to a culture and an evangelical mode.”<sup>28</sup> This “Southernization of America”<sup>29</sup> has manifested itself in a “theological correctness” (TC)—the imposition of fundamentalist religious and moral views on America by force of law.<sup>30</sup> Phillips warns that if history does repeat itself, America’s future is in jeopardy, as religious zeal in general and the influence of religion on the law in particular have often shortly predated the falls of other world empires.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Id.* at 100.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.* at 101.

By the end of the twentieth century, the fundamentalist-leaning Southern Baptist Convention, wedded to biblical inerrancy, was by far the largest Protestant Group. Indeed, the SBC, together with once peripheral sects, boasted some forty million adherents versus a combined fifteen million members of the four leading mainline churches . . . .

*Id.*

<sup>26</sup> *Id.* at 213.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 176.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.* at 167 (quoting EDWIN GAUSTAD & PHILLIP L. BARLOW, NEW HISTORICAL ATLAS OF RELIGION IN AMERICA 82 (2001)).

<sup>29</sup> *Id.* at 132.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.* at 236. Phillips describes “theological correctness” as “almost a mirror image of the political correctness displayed by secular liberals in discussing minority groups, women’s rights, and environmental sanctity.” *Id.* The issues swept into this “powerful conservative religious tide,” *id.* at 183, include the worldwide AIDS epidemic, *id.* at 236, abortion, *id.*, the role of judges, *id.* at 245, and government endorsement of Darwinian evolution, *id.* at 246, to name a few.

<sup>31</sup> *Id.* at 219. “[T]he precedents of past leading world economic powers show that blind faith and religious excesses . . . have often contributed to national decline, sometimes even being in its forefront.” *Id.*

Phillips contends TC's insistence that other disciplines such as law, politics, and science be studied in light of biblical theology is relegating America to second-class status in the world in terms of education, technology, and even agriculture.<sup>32</sup> Most critical, though, is the United States' Middle East policy. Phillips sees the second Gulf War as but the latest in a series of religiously motivated campaigns ("Christendom's familiar mass excitements"<sup>33</sup>) that are ideologically indistinguishable from the crusades. He cites Rome, Holland, and even pre-World War I Britain as examples of nations who went to war not to secure liberty or defend the homeland, but instead because of theology run amuck.<sup>34</sup>

Ostensibly, Phillips's concern is not with religion itself.<sup>35</sup> His argument is framed in historical terms, without explicit reference to the moral rightness or wrongness of religious influence in the public sphere.<sup>36</sup> But the virulence with which he attacks the conservative position on virtually every significant issue of cultural moment<sup>37</sup> causes the reader to wonder whether Phillips's concern is more with the views of those religious people who would influence the public debate than the success they may (or may not) be achieving.<sup>38</sup> More concerning, though,

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<sup>32</sup> *Id.* at 248.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.* at 250.

<sup>34</sup> *Id.*

<sup>35</sup> Religion, Phillips allows, "has generally served humankind well." *Id.* at 219.

<sup>36</sup> Two thousand years of thoughtful debate have produced no universal consensus on the proper relationship between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man. The apostles, St. Augustine, and John Calvin, are among the many who have wrestled with this deeply nuanced and challenging question. See *Acts* 1:6 (apostles), AUGUSTINE, *CITY OF GOD* (Random House 2000) (n.d.) (Augustine), and JOHN CALVIN: *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION 1485-1521* (Ford Lewis Battles trans., John T. McNeill ed., 1960) (Calvin). See also MICHAEL HORTON, *BEYOND CULTURE WARS: IS AMERICA A MISSION FIELD OR BATTLEFIELD?* 16 (1994) (arguing that the church has abandoned her "chief mission [which is] the ministry of Word and sacrament" and instead is excessively focused on temporal cultural effects). Nor is this debate unique to Christianity. Many Islamic terrorists believe they effect God's will on earth by cleansing the evil from society. Compare Elaine Sciolino, *From Tapes, a Chilling Voice of Islamic Radicalism in Europe*, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 18, 2005, at A1, with Laurie Goodstein, *Muslim Leaders Confront Terror Threat Within Islam*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 2, 2005, at A1 (demonstrating how some Muslim scholars have attempted to "provide a theological rebuttal to Muslim extremists who cite the Koran and Islamic texts to justify violence").

<sup>37</sup> See *supra* note 30.

<sup>38</sup> Phillips overstates his case when he contends that "[t]oday the SBC and the Assemblies of God are Washington power brokers." PHILLIPS, *supra* note 1, at 246 (emphasis added). Generally speaking, churches do not involve themselves in partisan politics, as any attempt to "influence legislation" or "intervene in . . . any political campaign" costs them their tax-exempt status. 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) (2000). See also

is how Phillips leads his readers, many of whom are likely ignorant of Christian literature and theological subcurrents, to draw false inferences. He disingenuously implies, for instance, that the author of the inspirational reading in which the President “immers[ed himself] each morning” in the days leading up to the Iraq invasion was a war monger.<sup>39</sup> His ominous warnings regarding the influence of Christian Reconstructionists on social policy are likewise overblown and are not in the spirit of fair debate.<sup>40</sup>

Further, Phillips adamantly refuses to engage opposing viewpoints. Regarding the teaching of “intelligent design” in schools, for instance, Phillips blithely dismisses any who would question what he deems the irrefutable fact of evolution as religiously motivated and anti-science.<sup>41</sup>

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*Anti-War Sermon Leads IRS to Probe Church for Tax Violations*, FOXNEWS.COM, Sept. 16, 2006, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,214132,00.html>. Phillips’ real opposition is to what he believes is the undue political influence he believes *members* of these respective churches exert.

<sup>39</sup> PHILLIPS, *supra* note 1, at 255. The book that Bush read was OSWALD CHAMBERS, *MY UTMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST* (Barbour Publ’g, Inc. 2005) (1935). Howard Fineman, *Bush and God*, NEWSWEEK, Mar. 10 2003, at 22. Of this very personal and non-warlike book Richard C. Halverson, a former chaplain to the United States Senate, said, “[I]t is the most popular book of daily devotions ever published. Millions of copies . . . are read every day by believers around the world . . . No book except the Bible has influenced my walk with Christ at such deep and maturing levels.” CHAMBERS, *supra* at i.

<sup>40</sup> Christian Reconstructionists, Phillips says, comprise one of the “two principal camps” among “the most intense” of those who “believe the Bible to be literally true.” PHILLIPS, *supra* note 1, at 66. Phillips asserts without citation to any primary source that the Christian Reconstruction “movement . . . proclaims ambitions [including] imposing biblical law and limiting the franchise to male Christians,” *id.* at 243, and that “[s]ome activists not only advocate the death penalty but support biblical death by stoning.” *Id.* at 418 n.62. For a good introduction to the scope and delimitations of Christian Reconstructionism as set forth by its recognized leader, see ROUSAS JOHN RUSHDOONY, *INSTITUTES OF BIBLICAL LAW 1-14* (1973), *reprinted in* JEFFERY A. BRAUCH, *IS HIGHER LAW COMMON LAW? READINGS ON THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN ANGLO-AMERICAN LAW* 349-363 (1999). Perhaps the most succinct statement of the Reconstructionists’ view toward the church’s role in government is this: “[The Christian Reconstructionist] firmly believes in the separation of church and state, but not the separation of the state—or anything else—from God.” Andrew Sandlin, *The Creed of Reconstructionism*, CHALCEDON REPORT (Aug. 1995), *reprinted in* BRAUCH, *supra*, at 362-63.

<sup>41</sup> PHILLIPS, *supra* note 1, at 246-48. In fact, brilliant scholars as credentialed as those Phillips cites have publicly argued the scientific and philosophical shortcomings of evolution. *See, e.g.*, *MERE CREATION: SCIENCE, FAITH, & INTELLIGENT DESIGN* (William A. Dembski, ed. 1998). This compilation of essays contributed by some of the 200 participants in a 1996 “conference [of] scientists and scholars who reject naturalism as an adequate framework for doing science,” *id.* at 9, is a significant if underappreciated work. Participants were from diverse religious backgrounds, and one speaker at the conference

In the same manner, Phillips's assertions regarding the dangers of theological correctness are weakened by his failure to address serious reporting on the widespread and successful efforts of government and private groups to marginalize Christians and force them to keep their beliefs out of the public sphere entirely.<sup>42</sup>

If the second part of *American Theocracy* highlights a problem Phillips perceives as largely confined to one vocal minority, Part III addresses a more ubiquitous ill: the overwhelming debt levels America, and individual Americans, have accepted. Here, Phillips takes readers beyond the anti-Keynesian arguments proffered by politicians and academics over the last generation,<sup>43</sup> contending that America's "new dominant economic sector"<sup>44</sup>—the financial service industry, which is comprised of the insurance, investment, and lending industries<sup>45</sup> and which has surpassed manufacturing in percentage of the gross domestic product<sup>46</sup>—creates no new wealth. Rather, this industry merely shuffles money within the overall economy, inevitably from the poorer to the wealthier of society.<sup>47</sup> When this happens, Phillips says, society's wealth is ephemeral, at risk of disappearing in the face of an ill-conceived or poorly executed war,<sup>48</sup> aggressive financial moves by other countries,<sup>49</sup> or economic terrorism.<sup>50</sup> If any of these occurred, Phillips worries, the consequences would be far direr than even a severe stock market crash. He anticipates that when the piper finally demands his pay, the average American could have the effective status of an indentured servant.<sup>51</sup> Phillips again brings historical reference to bear, but this time his comparisons seem better grounded in fact. Many nations that first built

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openly welcomed atheists to the debate. *Id.* Contributors to the book have doctoral and postdoctoral credentials in disciplines ranging from biochemistry to anthropology to mathematics to philosophy, and include one former clerk to the Chief Justice of the United States. *Id.* at 460-64.

<sup>42</sup> See, e.g., WILLIAM D. WATKINS, *THE NEW ABSOLUTES* (1996). Watkins traces the rise of aggressive secularism in the public sector, citing dozens of events in support of his thesis that a strong bias against conservative Christians is gaining traction in law and culture. *Id.* at 50-55.

<sup>43</sup> PHILLIPS, *supra* note 1, at 276-277.

<sup>44</sup> *Id.* at 266.

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*

<sup>46</sup> *Id.* at 265.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 268.

<sup>48</sup> *Id.* at 339-43.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.* at 336-37. Phillips suggests several Asian nations as strong candidates to make such a move. *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> *Id.* at 343.

<sup>51</sup> *Id.* at 324.



significant wealth through “hard industries”<sup>52</sup> eventually migrated to “rentier” economies, which America’s economy increasingly resembles.<sup>53</sup>

Part III of the book is the most compelling, and therefore the most concerning. If one can look past Phillips’s insistence on blaming government for what is really a cultural epidemic,<sup>54</sup> one hears a legitimate warning in his thesis. Like the first two, though, this section is weakened by Phillips’s condescending tone and dogmatic implication that religious fundamentalism lurks behind yet another societal malady. Rather than subject to rigorous analysis the wisdom of the laissez-faire approach to the marketplace often touted by Republicans, Phillips derisively chalks up the deregulation of the financial markets that has occurred under the Bush administration to a small-minded refusal or even inability to fathom the “awkward cultural and political externalities”<sup>55</sup> of macroeconomics. Phillips’s ad hominem attacks continue through the end of his book. By his final chapter, the conservative cause has become a “caricature” advocated only by “zealots.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Id.* at 311.

<sup>53</sup> *Id.* at 307. “[I]n each major phase of the development of capitalism, the leading country of the capitalist world goes through a period of financialization, wherein the most important economic dynamic is the creation and trading of abstract financial instruments rather than the production of genuine goods and services.” *Id.* at 302.

<sup>54</sup> Phillips contends that the nation’s sixty percent increase in consumer and mortgage debt that occurred between 2000 and 2004 “reflected the government’s emphasis on stimulating private debt . . . .” *Id.* at 328. While he condemns the Federal Reserve Bank’s consistent reduction of interests rates during that time period, *id.* at 324, and President Bush’s urging Americans to spend in the wake of 11 September 2001, in an attempt to stimulate the economy, *id.* at 281; *see also id.* at 323, he gives relatively short shrift to the overconsumption and “rampant and gullible materialism,” *id.* at 294, that are really the heart of the matter: “True, overconsumption is not ideally addressed in a political arena, but considerations beyond finance pull it there today.” *Id.*

<sup>55</sup> *Id.* at 318.

<sup>56</sup> *Id.* at 369. Phillips applies this pejorative to “covenant marriage” proponents. Covenant marriage concepts vary from state to state, but have in common an attempt to use the law to strengthen marriage, particularly in limiting divorce to traditional fault grounds or extended separation periods. Lynn Marie Kohm, *A Comparative Survey of Covenant Marriage Proposals in the United States*, 12 REGENT U.L. REV. 31, 31-32 (1999/2000). Significantly, the additional strictures of covenant marriages are voluntary—they are accepted by consent of the couple, rather than imposed by force of law. *Id.* at 40. As such, covenant marriage is but a partial return to basic family law principles accepted in the United States prior to the 1960s. JOHN WITTE, JR., FROM SACRAMENT TO CONTRACT: MARRIAGE, RELIGION, AND LAW IN THE WESTERN TRADITION

Its flaws notwithstanding, *American Theocracy* confronts readers with a profoundly important question: what makes a great nation cease to be great? The book comes at a time when the issues it addresses—oil dependence, religion in public life, and the seemingly limitless growth of public and private debt—demand public attention. Due to its subject matter alone, Phillips's work is an important contribution to the national discussion. But such momentous issues demand honest and open debate, unencumbered by bias or dogmatism. In this, *American Theocracy* disappoints.

Ideally, a book of this sort would bring Americans of varying viewpoints together to address these issues thoughtfully.<sup>57</sup> Instead, *American Theocracy* is likely only to further convince those who share Phillips's mistrust of the Republican Party and his contempt for the Bush administration, while further isolating those with whom he disagrees. *American Theocracy* succeeds in raising some very important issues. America must look beyond Phillips's work, however, for real help in settling them.

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211 (1997). To Phillips, then, those who reject the social trends of but two generations cannot have reached their positions thoughtfully, rather only by zeal.

<sup>57</sup> As a former Republican strategist, Kevin Phillips is uniquely situated to stimulate such national conversation. Cf. EDWARD O. WILSON, *THE CREATION: AN APPEAL TO SAVE LIFE ON EARTH* (2006), which Professor Wilson describes as an attempt by a self-confessed secular Darwinist to reach across the intellectual divide to engage conservative Christians in environmentalism. *Talk of the Nation: Edward O. Wilson, Bridging Science and Religion* (NPR broadcast Sept. 8, 2006), available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5788810>. Unlike Phillips, whose strident tone is unlikely to succeed in improving cooperation between evangelicals and secularists, Wilson may well, by his gentle approach and appeal to tenets of the Christian faith such as proper stewardship of the creation, effectively encourage positive communication and joint action.



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	(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	2,167	2,077
	(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	0	0
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b. (1), (2), (3), and (4))		5,067	4,965
d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free)	(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541	0	0
	(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541	0	0
	(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	0	0
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		0	0
f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d. and 15e.)		0	0
g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c. and 15f.)		5,067	4,965
h. Copies not Distributed		0	0
i. Total (Sum of 15g. and h.)		5,067	4,965
j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c. divided by 15g. times 100)		100	100

16. Publication of Statement of Ownership  
 Publication required. Will be printed in the Winter 2006 issue of this publication.  Publication not required.

17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner  
Collette E. Kitchel CPT, JA Editor, Military Law Review Date 1 OCT 2006

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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