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## Blinded By Might

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BY CAL THOMAS AND EDWARD DOBSON\*

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# BLINDED BY MIGHT

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## Two prominent evangelicals respond to criticism of the Religious Right's political involvement.

**T**he day after the 1980 election, those of us associated with what came to be called the “religious right”—I was working for Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority—thought we saw a revelation from God. Not only had Ronald Reagan won the White House, but five liberal Democrats had been swept from the Senate. The message? The marriage of church and state was looking better all the time. If God was slow bringing about the reforms we sought, perhaps we could help him out a little. The hymn “Onward Christian Soldiers” took on an entirely new meaning.

That was 20 years ago. Now the movement appears dispirited, even despondent. Politics has failed to

deliver what we thought it promised. Conservative Christians are increasingly frustrated that the cultural viruses of abortion and drugs have proved largely immune to political inoculation. Too many conservatives became obsessed with Bill Clinton’s impeachment, and the establishment GOP is now trying to distance itself from its believing base. Meanwhile, true believers—including me—are beginning to sense that the kingdom of this world, which regularly demands compromise, cannot

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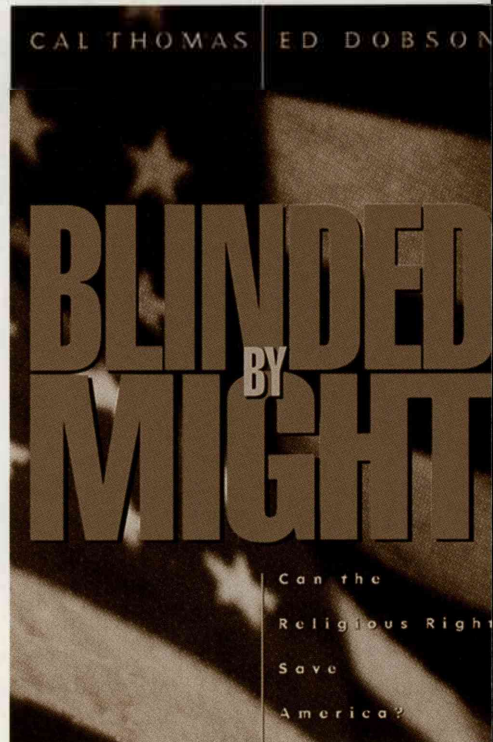
*Cal Thomas and Dr. Edward Dobson in Blinded By Might: Can the Religious Right Save America? Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. U.S. \$19.95; Canada \$28.99.*

be reconciled to a kingdom not of this world that allows for no compromise. Jesus understood this. Consider John 15:36, when Jesus tells Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world. . . my kingdom is from another place." His is not a realm that needs soldiers to establish or defend it. . . . The lesson: by and large, the Christian mission should be to change hearts, not laws.

Does this mean conservative Christians should completely withdraw from politics? Absolutely not: faith has been the driving force behind huge leaps forward in American life, especially the abolition of slavery and the civil-rights movement. But preachers, whether they be Jesse Jackson or Falwell, should step out of partisan politics. Reserving their right to speak on issues, they should refrain from endorsing or opposing politicians.

For Christians, the vision of worldly power is not a calling, but a distraction. It is a temptation Jesus rejected, not because it was dangerous, but because it was trivial compared with his mission. C. S. Lewis had it right: "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English evangelicals who abolished the slave

trade, all left their mark on earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in.' Aim at earth and you will get neither." Our eyes



should be lifted skyward—toward the company of heaven. The time has come for believers to focus on the next world, not just the next election cycle. □