

Week Six Handout

“Religion and American Foreign Policy through Christian Eyes”

Dr. James C. (Jim) Wallace



God in America: The Soul of a Nation

A Message from Jim:

Today, I am out of town. This absence came up on short notice. I am sorry I will not be with you, but I will make up this class at the end of the fall semester (Dec 14).

In my absence, I have an excellent video for you to view that will tie into my upcoming lectures.

This video is from the PBS series, “God in America.” It is an excellent series on religion in America – well documented, historically accurate, and balanced. The whole series is available at www.pbs.org/godinamerica/.

Today’s video – “The Soul of a Nation” – concerns the intertwining of religion with the foreign policy during the Cold War. It is a subject that we will spend several sessions on in the upcoming weeks. This video will help lay the groundwork for my future lectures.

I hope that you enjoy it and that it promotes a healthy discussion around your tables. See you next week!

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think it was valid for Billy Graham to mix religion and politics (i.e., preaching against communism) as a part of his early evangelistic crusades? Why or why not?
2. What do you think was the connection between the end of WWII, the advent of the Cold War and the promotion of Bible reading and prayers in the public schools? Since those national security conditions no longer existentially exist, do you think it is appropriate to leave Bible reading and prayer out of the public schools?
3. What is the connection, if any, between the domestic fight over secular vs. religious values and the events taking place in foreign affairs? Do you think that domestic affairs influence and shape foreign policy? In what ways?
4. What are the domestic events and conditions that potentially impact and influence our view of ISIS/ISIL and the current struggles in the Middle East?