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RHETORIC, RELIGION, AND REPRESENTATIVES:
THE USE OF GOD IN PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL ADDRESSES FROM 1933-2009
AS REFLECTIONS OF TRENDS IN AMERICAN RELIGIOSITY

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iii
1. Introduction	1
2. Literature Review	10
Chapter Overview	10
Presidential Rhetoric, Rhetorical Presidency, and Beyond	11
Rhetorical Analysis of Inaugural Address	18
Inaugural Address and God	24
3. Method of Rhetorical Analysis	30
Chapter Overview	30
Inaugural Address as a Genre	31
A Modern Perspective	33
An Inaugural Address Genre Study of United States Religiosity	34
Concluding Remarks	37
4. Individual Analysis	38
Vision and Overview	38
Roosevelt	39
Truman	42
Eisenhower	46
Kennedy	50
Johnson	52
Nixon	55
Carter	56

Reagan	58
Bush	60
Clinton	63
W. Bush	65
Obama	67
Concluding Remark	70
5. Trends and Implications	71
Trends in the Uses of God	71
Trends in the Uses of Scripture	83
The 21 st Century as a New Side of History	87
6. Conclusion	92
Summary of Findings	92
Significance	94
Limitations and Challenges	96
Further Research	97
Final Thoughts	98
References	100
Biographical Sketch	106

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the rhetorical functions of references to God and the Bible in the first presidential inaugural addresses from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Barack Obama. The Inaugural Address serves to reunite the nation after the division of an election. The language used in this address reflects the culture and identity of the nation it speaks to. Through a modern rhetorical analysis of the inaugural addresses from 1933-2009, this thesis aims to identify the trends in American religiosity, as can be seen through particular use of references to God and uses of biblical metaphor as a rhetorical and persuasive tool in the inaugural address.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*In this dedication of a Nation we humbly ask the blessing of God. May He protect each and every one of us.
May he guide me in the days to come.*

-Franklin D. Roosevelt's Inaugural Address 1933

The famous French political thinker and historian, Alexis de Tocqueville, arrived to the United States in the early nineteenth century and upon his arrival observed, “the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention” (p. 1). This same aspect of religious curiosity sparked my interest in this project. As a daughter of a politician and a student of religion and of rhetoric, my position and perspective are unique. With years of experience studying the relationship between rhetoric and religion alongside a personal interest in the political sphere, I seek to find the manifestations and implications of the relationship between God and the United States as can be seen through the inaugural address genre.

At its birth, United States' political actors had a unique relationship with God and religion. For example, founding fathers John Adams and George Washington found themselves at St. Mary's Church for afternoon Mass while the Continental Congress was meeting (Holmes 2006, p.2). During his presidential years, our nation's first president worshiped in a variety of places, favoring Anglican and Episcopal churches. George Washington delivered his 1789 Inaugural Address “tendering homage to the Great Author.” Holmes (2006) discusses Washington's individual religious beliefs, emphasizing that Washington's diary indicates, “he worshiped more frequently during national crises and periods of resistance” (pp. 60-61). Therefore, the references to God in American politics have been evident since, at the very least, the time of George Washington. Windt (1986) boldly asserts at the opening of his text,

Presidential Rhetoric, “politics is about power” (p. 1). If we accept this claim that politics is inherently concerned with power, and United States politics have been innately tied to God, then what is the relationship between the rhetorical use of God and our nation’s most powerful people, the Presidents?

The United States of America is no stranger to God. Religious references have been made in everything from casual event toasts to campaigning events to State of the Union Addresses. Campbell, Green and Layman (2001) have researched a recent phenomenon of political personalization, that is, an interest in the candidate’s personal life, claiming, “the role of religion in American elections has received ever-increasing attention” (p. 42). Acknowledging this increase in attention to politician’s personal, religious beliefs allows for new avenues of research into the relationship between religion and politics.

To illustrate the relevance of this topic, I draw attention to an article by Cathy Lynn Grossman of *USA Today* titled, “Obama is Ramping Up His God Talk.” Grossman (2011) reports that Obama recited Psalm 46¹ at a September 11th memorial event in New York City and that same night quoted Psalm 30² at a memorial concert in Washington. Grossman quotes David Domke, Communication Professor at University of Washington, as referring to Obama’s technique as making “Christian” and “American” synonymous by interweaving claims about the current state of the nation in crisis with images of and references to God. Through the quoting of these Psalms, Obama aligns the circumstances of the United States with those referred to in these scriptures and uses the analogies of the Judeo-Christian Bible to support his efforts to calm the nation in time of crisis. This recent example is cause to suggest that the intentional use of God in

¹ The book of Psalms is a collection of song or hymn present in the Judeo-Christian Bible. Psalm 46 is an outcry to God representing strength, refuge, and fortress.

² Psalm 30 tells of a faithful worshiper who receives goodness from God at the end of trials

presidential rhetoric remains significant today because when facing a crisis, President Obama chose to invoke words of spiritual strength and refuge in God as encouragement to the nation.

The benefit of looking into presidential rhetoric for a glimpse into this relationship between God and politics is in what Domke and Coe (2011) call “The God Strategy” (p.7). This God strategy is defined through their assertion that political leaders have taken advantage of rhetorical use of God “through calculated, deliberate, and partisan use of faith” (Domke & Coe, 2011, p.7). The authors suggest that the manipulation of faith has been employed by politicians to connect with religiously inclined voters. This strategy appeals intentionally to Christian conservatives; Domke and Coe (2010) further argue that it was used specifically during the Reagan administration to rally Christians from all varieties of denominations from a shared morality, faith, and national politics. This strategy has not gone unnoticed by the Christians it hopes to rally; Domke and Coe (2010) discuss fundamentalist preacher Jerry Falwell and his charge against Bill Clinton’s 1992 national convention acceptance speech reference to “The New Covenant” as “misquoting and manipulating the holy scriptures for political purposes” (p.5).

A candidate’s discussion of God in a public speech or address reveals a piece of his/her personal, private self through the self-disclosure of religiosity. According to Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer (2012), the interest in politicians’ personal lives has risen and the “focus of news coverage has shifted from parties and organizations to candidates and leaders and that, in addition, those individual politicians are increasingly portrayed as private persons” (p. 2). The authors define this concept of personalization as “a change in the presentation of politics in the media, as expressed in a heightened focus on individual politicians and a diminished focus on parties, organizations, and institutions” (Van Aelst, Sheafer, & Stanyer, 2012, p.206). With a shifted focus of political candidates from policies to private lives, there are significant effects;

personalization might be seen as a threat to the political “battlefield” (Van Aelst, Sheafer, & Stanyer, 2012, pp. 206). The researchers’ key findings revealed that personalization of political news has received ample confirmation (Val Aelst, Sheafer, & Stanyer, 2012, p.208). Within this personalization of candidates comes the interest in that individual’s private life; private life encompasses family, personal relationships, and religious beliefs. This personalization of politicians is a consequence of both the frontier of new media technologies and strategic communication by political actors. New media technology allows individuals the opportunity to participate in a candidate’s private life by means of following him/her on Facebook and Twitter, frequently viewing and reviewing his/her public speaking engagements on YouTube, or using search engines to investigate his/her family life or personal past. Thus, if the political actor is aware of the growing personalization of his/her persona, he/she may actively and strategically participate in the cultivation of his/her publicly private self by offering personal information he/she believes will allow the citizens to perceive him/her in a particular way. Overall, an understanding of this interest in the personhood of a candidate contributes to the positioning of this argument among communication scholarship; that is, if the individual U.S. citizen is increasingly concerned with the private lives of candidates, then attention to the rhetoric that discloses information about the candidates’ religious beliefs is of importance.

Politics and rhetoric have an unbreakable bond since communication is a necessary element of the political sphere. Rhetoric and religion also have a relationship; as Kenneth Burke (1980) explains, “the subject religion falls under the head of rhetoric in the sense that rhetoric is the art of persuasion...and in order to plead for such as persuasively as possible, the religious always ground their exhortations in statements of the widest and deepest possible scope, concerning the authorship of men’s motives” (Foreword). Therefore, if politics is about power,

power is achieved through the persuasion of the other, rhetoric is the art of persuasion, and religion is a tool of persuasion, then elements all are intrinsically intertwined with the words of our nation's presidents.

Through a rhetorical analysis of presidential inaugural addresses from 1933-2009, I will further investigate this relationship between rhetoric, politics, and religion. I will do this by locating significant moments in the trends of the nation's religiosity through analysis of the inaugural speeches. Examining historical texts gives life to the speech beyond the text itself by establishing answers to questions of meaning. Critiquing the text from a rhetorical perspective calls into question issues of agency and authority to derive meaning. As Roland Barthes (1979) complicates the conceptualization of a text, he describes a text not as a defined object, but as a force that can be both approached and experienced; it is plural, and the reader of a text is the agent that interacts with many texts. Once words are composed, a text disconnects from its author and becomes a "space of many dimensions" (Barthes, 1977, p. 246) that can be analyzed. The unity, then, of this disjointed text is in its destination (Barthes, 1977, p. 246). Therefore, in this thesis, with this foundational perspective, I will examine the disjointed texts of individual inaugural addresses. These texts are disjointed insofar as different individuals originally delivered them at different times and in different political environments. The purpose of this examination is contributing to scholarship by moving toward an understanding of the relationship between religion and the United States by drawing conclusions and composing inferences concerning the use of God in presidential inaugural addresses.

Rhetorical criticism from a modern perspective represents an approach significantly influenced historically by Descartes, Locke, Hume, and contemporarily by Kenneth Burke, and Wayne C. Booth. Rene' Descartes (1596-1650) was "one of the most profound thinkers in the

history of the world” (Smith, 2009, p. 208). Descartes’ way of thinking concerning existence in the world stemming from reason as opposed to the senses embraced the schema of Aristotelian rhetoric. Building upon the emphasis on reason, John Locke (1632-1704) reinforced the value of the mind and the way knowledge is formed by incorporating the value of experience as the means to sensing and shaping meaning in the material world. David Hume (1711-1776) then advanced Locke’s notion of association of ideas as a form of invention, claiming that even complex ideas associate therefore, a speaker can bring an audience to a particular sense by speaking on a related understanding (Smith, 2009).

Utilizing these modern rhetorical perspectives, I approach presidential rhetoric with the hopes of identifying patterns in the relationship between religion and politics in the United States by analyzing the seminal speech of the highest-ranking politician in the United States- the inaugural address. This seminal speech, to incorporate Hume’s language, has particular natural associations; that is, the nature of the inaugural ceremony itself already carries with it significant value in the history of the United States. Furthermore, religious references, to the believer, would call forth particular associative feelings of perhaps, trust, faith, and hope. Therefore, a rhetorical analysis of an inaugural address concerned with particular uses of religious references and texts reveals a unique perspective of the nation’s religiosity through the lens of political speech. The ultimate research question is: what is the relationship between God, the United States, and politics as demonstrated in the presidential inaugural addresses since 1933?

The texts that I will analyze in this thesis stretch from Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 to Barack Obama’s inaugural address in 2009. Specifically, I will analyze the first inaugural address given by each president within the time frame, not addressing those inaugurals delivered by an incumbent president particularly because their identity and relationship with the United

States has been previously established and therefore, the inaugural speech for an incumbent president is not as necessarily importunate or indicative of an aim to please the nation. These years were chosen strategically with respect to Domke's (2010) claim that the turning point for religious references occurred with Ronald Reagan in 1980. To gather distinct data regarding before and after this particular suggested turning point, an even sample of texts from both before and after Reagan should be considered. It has been thirty-five years since the Reagan 1980 turning point; therefore, thirty-five years prior to the turning point would be 1945. The year 1945 was the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt and therefore, the end of his term in office. I intentionally chose to stretch the parameter to 1933 to incorporate Franklin D. Roosevelt's first inaugural address. The total number of inaugural addresses that will be examined is twelve.

The current state of research on God-references in inaugural addresses at the aggregate level is slim. One example of the detail present in composing just one speech is in Crowell's (1958) analysis of Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech. Crowell (1958) attends to each individual tweak of terms and shift of sentences in each of the seven full drafts of the text, illustrating the meticulous notice paid to a Presidential speech. Scholars such as Karlyn Kohrs-Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamison (1985) have paid attention to inaugural addresses specifically and Cynthia Toolin (1983) analyzed religious references from 1789-1981. Campbell and Jamieson (1985) determines the epideictic nature of the inaugural genre and Toolin (1983) sought to discover, through content analysis, the relationship between religion and politics; she claimed that her work was a preliminary attempt at locating this phenomenon of a "civil religion in the specific area of national political speeches" (p. 39), and this thesis draws on and builds upon many of her findings. This thesis examines the rhetorical use of God-references in inaugural addresses from 1933 to the present and where it expands upon Toolin's (1983) research is in its method. Where

Toolin (1983) utilized content analysis, this thesis incorporates a modern perspective using rhetorical analysis looking at the inaugural address as a particular genre. Inaugural addresses are carefully and artfully composed pieces of oratory, which can be examined from multiple angles to create depth of understanding. No word in a presidential public address is chance, coincidence, or accident; each term, phrase, and pause is carefully calculated. As noted, scholars such as Crowell (1958) have examined the multiple drafts of presidential speeches acknowledging the attention to detail. If each individual word and reference is carefully chosen for a purpose, then references to God are highly intentional. A rhetorical analysis of the inaugural addresses allows for inferences to be made and conclusions drawn beyond the scope of a methodological schema such as content analysis.

The challenge that I acknowledge outright in engaging with rhetorical analysis of inaugural addresses lies in developing a specific understanding for what constitutes a God-reference. For example, what constitutes a reference to God versus simply concluding a speech with ‘God bless America’? For this project, I first draw upon Burke’s (1980) logology of God. “God, by definition transcends all symbol-systems,” according to Burke (1980, p. 15), and for language purposes, a God-reference is not confined to physical terms, but all words for God must be considered analogically. Therefore, I define a God-reference as specific use of the term ‘God’ as well as a latent God-reference through poetic, artistic, and analogical term such as ‘Creator’ or ‘Author.’ A God-reference with respect to the self would constitute calling upon God to guide a particular candidate in his leadership, or referencing God’s place in his campaign. A God-reference with respect to the nation, beyond the rhetorical use of ‘God bless America,’ would be direct references to the United States having been built upon the founding fathers’ faith in God, or God’s place in the state of the nation today.

In this thesis, I will approach the inaugural addresses delivered from 1933 to 2009 from a modern rhetorical perspective (which I will explain in detail in chapter 3). However, it is first necessary to situate this thesis within the current research; therefore, the next chapter of this thesis will first examine the literature concerning presidential rhetoric, followed by a review of presidential rhetoric specifically attending to the inaugural address. Then I will discuss the research surrounding religion and rhetoric, incorporating the review of current literature with a discussion of Domke and Coe's (2010) God-strategy, concluding with a discussion of the inaugural address as a genre and situating this thesis as a genre study. Following a discussion of the current research on presidential rhetoric, rhetoric of inaugural addresses, religious references in inaugural addresses, and the form and genre of the inaugural act, I will outline specifically in Chapter 3 the position of a modern rhetorical critic and the process of rhetorical analysis and genre study that I will use to analyze the inaugural addresses delivered from 1933-2009. In Chapter 4, I will then present an individual analysis of the twelve inaugural addresses, and in Chapter 5, I will develop the findings in a manner that contributes to the research question of this thesis: what is the relationship between God, the United States as demonstrated in the presidential inaugural addresses since 1933? Finally, in Chapter 6, I will discuss the significance of this research with respect to its contributions to scholarship on presidential rhetoric, acknowledge potential weaknesses, and explain areas where this research is not a single project, but a springboard for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

This specific purpose of this chapter is to assess what has been previously researched and inferred regarding presidential rhetoric, inaugural addresses, religious references, and genre studies. In the next four sections of this chapter, I will first assess the current body of research on presidential rhetoric, positioning this thesis as a means to establish the relationship between the president and rhetoric. Secondly, I will further explore specific research attending to the inaugural address, discussing scholarship on the intricacies and detail of such a rhetorical act, followed by an interrogation of religious references within them. Finally, I will present claims concerning the inaugural address as a genre through a discussion of rhetorical use of biblical analogy and God-references within the inaugural addresses, which exists as a representation of a relationship between God and the United States.

This chapter serves to both position and contextualize this thesis within the field of presidential rhetoric. This well-established field of research has scholarly and practical significance insofar as the words of our nation's president impact rhetorical scholarship. In his address at Marietta, Ohio in 1938, Franklin Roosevelt spoke, "let us never forget that the government is ourselves, and not an alien power over us." These words position presidential rhetoric as relevant to the individual scholar because politicians are representatives of the individual. Positioning this paper within the field of presidential rhetoric at the forefront is significant to understanding the inferences, patterns, and conclusions I will draw in the latter chapters of this thesis.

Presidential Rhetoric, Rhetorical Presidency, & Beyond

Rhetoric proper is the basic starting point at which this research begins. Keith and Lundberg (2008) claim in the preface to *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric* that “gaining an understanding of rhetorical theory and its practical applications is a critical component to effective and competent communication” (p.3). Therefore, in order to understand the relationship between the president and rhetoric, we must begin with rhetoric. Corbett (1990) defines rhetoric as, “the art of discourse, an art that aims to improve the capability or writers or speakers to inform, persuade, or motivate particular audiences in specific situations,” (p.1). For this thesis, rhetoric is the art of discourse that equips the President of the United States to inform, persuade, and motivate citizens in the specific situation of his/her inauguration.

The relationship between a president and rhetoric is undeniable. As Medhurst (2006) claimed, “A president cannot escape rhetoric- as much as some would like to do so. For good or ill, all presidents are rhetorical presidents” (p. ix). In a rhetorical situation, Bitzer (1968) wants to know the nature, characteristics, and contexts of a discourse. If a rhetorical discourse is present, there must be a rhetorical situation to which it is responding (Bitzer, 1968). For the presidential rhetorical situation, the inaugural address naturally responds to the situation of a nation with a new leader and the desire to hear from him. “Every audience at any moment is capable of being changed by a speech,” Bitzer (1968, p. 3) claims, and in the moment of listening to an Inaugural speech, the potential for audience impact is great. Accepting Bitzer’s (1968) words leads to the understanding that as a rhetorical situation, the inaugural address has the potential to change the listeners. This change can manifest in the form of the persuasion of the citizens who previously opposed the president during election; it also has the potential to motivate the citizens toward hope of a greater future under his/her new leadership. As Medhurst (1996) highlights Bitzer’s

rhetorical situation is a “constellation of relationships” (p. xv), and it is the audience, not the speaker that is the final arbiter of persuasion. From this perspective, presidential rhetoric is intrinsically bound with the relationship between president and citizens, and furthermore, it is the citizens- the audience- of a particular piece of presidential rhetoric that determines the persuasion or influence of the discourse. In terms of an inaugural address then, the unique exigence at the time of inauguration presents a distinctive situation within which the speech is delivered. The relationship between the United States and its new president begins with this particular moment and its outcome determines the foundation of that particular president’s term. Because the factors are dynamic and the relationships are complex and constantly changing, the best that any scholar or practitioner of rhetoric can do is “ to attempt to assess the current configuration of forces in the rhetorical situation that presently exists and always be aware that situations, like humans, are constantly evolving” (Medhurst, 1996, p. xvi).

Presidential rhetoric is studied across fields, from social sciences to humanities. According to Zarefsky (2004), scholars are particularly concerned with recurrent patterns as well as deepening the understanding of power and control. Particularly relevant to presidential studies is the conception that “rhetoric is both a type of evidence available for use by scholars in any discipline, and a field of study in its own right” (Zarefsky, 2004, p.608). Therefore, the rhetorical element of presidential speeches is concerned with patterns, power, and control, and is a tool for establishing the evidence of these exigencies. In terms of presidential research, rhetoric is more than the lens to observe through, but also the tool and method of discovery.

The relationship between rhetoric and the presidency is widely accepted, and Stuckey (2010) discusses its history. Stuckey (2010) composes her piece upon the foundation of two seminal pieces of literature in the genre of rhetoric and the presidency: Ceaser, Thurow, Tulis,

and Bessette's (1981) article, "The Rhetorical Presidency," and Tulis' (1987) book, *The Rhetorical Presidency*. Tulis (1987) values public oratory and interrogates the conceptualization of modern rhetorical presidency as a "child grown mature" (p. 7). This metaphor implies that the rhetorical presidency represents change; these changes concern research insofar as Tulis (1987) claims assessing change and its implications is "the most influential tradition of scholarship on the American presidency" (p. 9).

The rhetorical presidency is a cause, not an effect, according to Tulis (1987). Presidential rhetoric is reflective, intimately bound up with rhetoric itself, and the most visible practical manifestation of political practice (p. 13). There are three trends in the rhetorical presidency according to Tulis (1987): the old way, the middle way and the new way. Relevant to the time frame of this thesis is Tulis' new rhetoric; this new way emerged at the turn of the twentieth century and an extensive use of "popular rhetoric" (p. 117) manifesting in inspirational speech or visionary address and policy rhetoric, particularly triggered by Woodrow Wilson's term. There are limits however to the rhetorical presidency, according to Tulis' (1987), because there are bounds to what even the most skillful and popular president can accomplish. There are multiple factors that influence a particular individual's belief, value, or opinion and hearing a speech, even a powerful and moving speech, is only one of those factors. Therefore, a great public speech given by the President of the United States is not a hypodermic needle that will indefinitely influence all its hearers and viewers. Acknowledging this aspect of a presidential speech furthers the need for research in the field of presidential rhetoric because it must be calculated and intentional. The modern rhetorical presidency is powerful nonetheless; as such it is not simply good or bad, but rather both (Tulis, 1996, p. 4).

The argument present in Ceaser, Thurow, Tulis and Bessette's (1981) article and Tulis' (1987) book of is essentially that changes in presidential power, mass media, and the selection process have shifted the congressional balance and as such, a particular connection between argumentation and constitution must be struck (Stuckey, 2010). Recognizing the claim that cultural factors such as the media have impacted the dynamics of presidential rhetoric, this thesis aims to explore the trends for over eighty years.

On the other hand, Medhurst (1996) provides what he calls, 'a tale of two constructs' (p. vii) which presents a series of arguments for the rhetorical presidency as well as challenges to the rhetorical presidency. Medhurst (1996) describes these two constructs as "the rhetorical presidency and presidential rhetoric" (p. xi), both of which carrying significant strengths, weaknesses, and potentials to benefit from the insights generated by the other.

Specifically, Medhurst (1996) challenges the rhetorical presidency first, by claiming the construct assumes that at some point there was a non-rhetorical presidency and that the two can be easily distinguished. Of the other concerns, the most relevant to this thesis, is the notion that the only meaningful form of governance in the rhetorical presidency is policy-rhetoric. However, as Medhurst (1996) suggests, it would be more productive for scholars interested in rhetoric to position themselves from the perspective that rhetoric is an art with both practical and productive dimensions pointing both inward as well as outward (p. xiv). These inward dimension of presidential rhetoric may be reflected in the dimension of ethos, which is a primary means of persuasion according to Thurow (1996) who expands upon the effects of character by describing the way the nation will likely be convinced by a particular president "if they perceive him to be prudent, virtuous, and to have good will toward them" (p. 15).

Ivie (1996) also takes up the rhetorical presidency, reiterating that the construct both reinforces and extends Neustadt's (1960) claim that the power of the presidency is a function of the power to persuade. Ivie (1996) specifically critiques Ceaser et al.'s rhetorical presidency comment as exploring an "overly restricted sense of rhetoric...one in which it is reduced to irrational persuasion and dissociated from reason, knowledge, and true deliberation" (p. 161). Where the schemas diverge, from Ivie's (1996) perspective is where the rhetorical presidency sees its rise as contributing to institutional dysfunction. Instead, Ivie (1996) proposes that the modern presidency has developed into a "hybrid of constitutional officer and popular leader" (p. 162). It can be argued that the divergence of the rhetorical presidency and presidential rhetoric lies in the perspective of the relationship between the president and rhetoric as causal factor or an effect.

The words spoken by the president of the United States carry a weight and power above any other individual in the nation simply because of his position as president. Scholars have recognized this and sought to analyze the words of our Nation's leaders. Druckman and Holmes (2004) have posed the research question: does Presidential Rhetoric matter? Through an experiment to examine the effects of a speech by President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, Druckman and Holmes (2004) sought to evaluate participant's approval of the president regarding his handling of the overall job, terrorism, and the economy based on this speech. The scholars found clear evidence that the President can use rhetoric to influence his approval among the citizens. Acknowledging this power leads to the innumerable opportunities for presidential rhetorical scholarship in understanding the dynamics of presidential rhetoric and its relationship with power.

According to Windt (2004), a president has significant political power with public opinion. With this in mind, the discipline of presidential rhetoric is “concerned with the study of presidential public persuasion as it affects the ability of a president to exercise the powers of the office” (Windt, 2004, p.103). Primarily concerned with defining the field of presidential rhetoric, Windt (2004) establishes four primary categories of research: single speeches, movement studies, genre studies, and miscellaneous research. For the rhetorical analysis and study of inaugural addresses, a genre study is the relevant category. As a category of presidential rhetorical research, genre studies are concerned with what different Presidents have spoken on similar occasions, on similar themes, or to similar audiences. Within this study, analysis will be done within the genre of the inaugural address. The inaugural address is spoken by the newly inaugurated president, it is concerned with unifying the nation under its newest leader, and it is spoken to the intended audience of the citizens of the United States.

Zarefsky (2004) posits, “unpacking a text, probing its dimensions and possibilities, helps the scholar to understand better the richness of a very specific situation that already has passed and will not return in exactly the same way” (p. 610). Presidential rhetoric exists within this very situation insofar as its speeches are spoken and they exist in that moment, but also are preserved as historical documents to be further understood in a second moment by a scholar. In his 2004 article, “Presidential Rhetoric and the Power of Definition,” Zarefsky (2004) presents eight case studies illustrating the power in public conceptions of political reality. The first involved George Washington and Shay’s Rebellion in 1794; the second, Andrew Jackson’s veto of the bank bill in 1832 and his emotional message to Congress calling on voters to sustain his action in the coming election. The third case analyzed Abraham Lincoln’s acceptance of the Civil War in order to preserve the Union through his redefinitions of aims and purposes war in 1862. The fourth case

presented is Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1932 campaign speeches concerning individual freedoms, as they stood threatened by big business. The fifth and sixth cases analyzed both involve Lyndon Johnson, the former his State of the Union address proclaiming his "unconditional war on poverty" (Zarefsky, 2004, p.616), and the latter his speech at Howard University that "effectively redefined equal opportunity to embrace equal outcomes, not just equal opportunities" (p. 616). The seventh case involved Ronald Reagan's intent to reduce welfare programs, and the eighth case is Bush's response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th. Zarefsky (2004) presents these eight cases as strong examples of the power of presidential rhetoric because each of them was an opportunity for public persuasion. Zarefsky (2004) concludes his article by acknowledging this existence of powerful presidential rhetoric and posing the question, "what does presidential rhetoric do?" (p. 619).

To answer Zarefsky's (2004) question in the context of this thesis, presidential rhetoric inspires, persuades, and motivates. In each of the cases Zarefsky (2004) presented, the president had an opportunity to influence United States citizens' perspective. The third case involving Abraham Lincoln displayed presidential rhetoric as having served to change the perspective of the purpose and aims of war. In that case, Lincoln's rhetoric served to reorient the nation's view of the Civil War by presenting new definitions of war and offering a preservatory purpose of war insofar as its goal was ultimately unity and good. Therefore, what presidential rhetoric did was to inspire a new outlook on the current state of the nation, persuade the citizens to see from a new perspective, and motivate them to understand the good purpose of war.

Each time a president speaks is not in the presence of war, but it is always in a time of potential motivation, persuasion, and inspiration regarding whatever the current issues are in the United States. In the time of inauguration, for example, the president has the opportunity to begin

his term by inspiring the nation, persuading the citizen's to support his/her leadership, and motivating them toward a particular hope for the next four years. Therefore, this is a critical rhetorical moment because presidential rhetoric in this situation serves to set the stage for the next four years, and national support is necessary. This moment is not static, but rather in a state of constant changes. As Medhurst (1996) describes living in the realm of rhetoric, one must be comfortable with the constant change and ambiguity of human existence and persevere nonetheless because rhetoric is a culture, a way of living. The inaugural address is a moment, a situation that is ever changing and yet ever participating in its genre; that is, although each individual inaugural speech is individual and dynamic, it is still a piece of the larger whole, the inaugural genre. It is a critical moment in presidential rhetoric; as such, the next section of this chapter presents the specific research regarding rhetorical analyses of inaugural addresses.

Rhetorical Analysis of Inaugural Address

In an analysis aiming to understand the relationship between the inaugural address and rhetoric, the piece of oratory most suited for research is the first public speech given by the political leader of the Nation, the President of the United States, following his official inauguration into office. This address serves to set the environment for the next four years of leadership and has the power to move the nation toward unity in its moment. The inaugural address is the first moment the new President stands and speaks to the people he now represents and attempts to instill hope and support for the next four years.

Among the current body of literature, there are scholars who have researched the Inaugural Address through a rhetorical lens. "Persuasion is vital to the democratic practice of leadership," according to Kane and Patapan (2010, p. 371), and because of this reality, it is

necessary to use a rhetorical lens when evaluating Presidential speech. Through an evaluation of rhetorical style as potentially pernicious insofar as the public perceives charming language as artificial, Kane and Patapan (2010) argue that the leader must aim at rhetorical style that sounds natural, is conversational, and avoids flowery oration. The paradox here is in the politician's desire to appear credible and knowledgeable, but also personable, comfortable, friendly, and natural. Kane and Patapan (2010) reiterate Aristotelian rhetorical foundations by recalling the idea that "audiences will always judge the force of the speech in large part by their judgment of the character and trustworthiness of the speaker" (p. 377). The task then of the democratic leader is to speak the language of his/her audience in order to enhance reliability and trustworthiness. Therefore, political candidates have no choice but to shape their rhetoric in attempt to woo voters (Kane & Patapan, 2010, p. 384).

Regarding analysis of the inaugural addresses, there are scholars such as Zarefsky (1988) and Slagell (1991) who have closely examined the inaugural addresses of specific presidents, such as Abraham Lincoln, through a close textual analysis. Zarefsky (1988) calls attention to the rhetorical situation of the Civil War that Lincoln must respond to in his address, and Slagell (1991) aims to offer a "microscopic" (p. 155) view of the text in order to offer a new perspective. On the other end of the spectrum, Chester (1980) aimed at looking systematically into the art of the inaugural address as a unit because scholarship at that time "rarely, if ever, compare[d] and contrast[e] the inaugural talks of different presidents" (p. 572). Chester's (1980) work acted in response to what he describes as "the widespread sentiment that presidential inaugural talks are mostly vapid rhetoric" (p. 571). Chester (1980) initially discusses each president's style and reputation, such as positioning Abraham Lincoln as one of the greatest speechmakers, William Henry Harrison as having spoken the longest inaugural address, and Franklin D. Roosevelt as

having spoken some of the most debated words, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself” (p. 573). Following these breakdowns, Chester (1980) identifies a period from 1985-1924 in which financial matters were most prevalent and neither civil service nor immigration were discussed. Chester (1980) also identifies the time following F.D.R. as having taken a path that generally avoided specific recommendations on domestic issues. Significantly relevant to this thesis, Chester (1980) identifies an absence of religious platforms until James A. Garfield in 1881 and Grover Cleveland in 1893. Essentially, then, the turn of the century marked multiple shifts in inaugural rhetoric both topically, through changes in discussion of domestic policy issues, and rhetorically, through the incorporation of religious references.

Ericson (1997) argues that the function of an Inaugural Address is precisely to express the cultural features of American politics and not to forward the particular President’s public agenda. (p. 727). Ericson’s (1997) study aimed at identifying which themes were most prominent in the inaugural addresses, because the inaugural address functions to highlight the important, current, cultural features of its time. Through a content analysis of fifty-two inaugural addresses, Ericson (1997) found eleven prominent themes: civic virtue, nonpartisanship, national unity, general policy, cooperation with congress, popular support, a providential supreme being, the American mission, political continuity, president’s role as defender of the constitution, and federalism (pp.728-729). Ericson’s seventh theme of “a providential divine being” (p. 735) is expressed through a wide variety of names including “the Almighty,” and “the Great Author.” The use of these allegorical terms as well as the specific use of the term “God” is, according to Ericson (1980), “primarily political, not religious,” (p. 736).

Campbell (1990) approaches presidential rhetorical scholarship with a critical, rather than historical perspective, paying direct attention to the recurrent rhetorical acts through which the

presidential office functions. The presidency in the United States, as Campbell (1990) describes, was created not by following a particular blueprint, “rather it was a unique amalgam of innovations extracted from experience in colonial state governments, British precedents, and the conceptions of theorists who has written about the nature of governance” (p. 1). Specifically, within the genre of inaugural addresses, Campbell (1990) classifies it within Aristotle’s epideictic rhetoric because of its general purposes of unifying the audience, rehearsing values, setting forth principles, demonstrating requirements, and urging contemplation as well as its ceremonial nature. This thesis utilizes this classification when rhetorically analyzing the inaugural speeches and their unifying purpose as well as their generic aim of connecting with the citizens through historic and religious appeals as well as inspirations toward a promising future.

There has also been interest in presidential inaugural addresses from such scholars as John McDiarmid (1937), who systematically examined the use of symbols in the texts. McDiarmid (1937) laid the foundation for rhetorical analysis of inaugurals by attending to the tone of the addresses, repetition, historical and constitutional references, as well as describing the current state of the economy through glowing adjectives. Through rhetorical analysis, Lim (2002) sought to locate trends in presidential rhetoric from George Washington to Bill Clinton. Lim (2002) focused on identifying the rhetorical manifestations of what he identifies as the paradigm shift toward a “rhetorical presidency” (p. 329) and discusses the extent to which scholarship on Rhetoric and the Presidency is largely located within political science whose scholars are more interested in the “underlying doctrines of government than in the words” (Lim 2002, pp. 329). The methodological “innovation” Lim (2002, p. 331) incorporates is the use of traditional content analysis categories alongside a pattern analysis for specific and representative words. Of the five trends noted, one particularly relevant to this thesis is the idea of an abstract

rhetoric, “an expansive rhetoric that makes religious, poetic, and idealistic references” (pp. 334). This form of abstract rhetoric focuses on elemental ideas and concepts, and according to Lim (2002), rhetoricians through the ages have realized its great political value. Seyranian and Bligh (2008) also recognize the use of abstract rhetoric by charismatic political leaders insofar as leaders who used these techniques did so most frequently during the place of a speech intended to move the audience. The sample Seyranian and Bligh (2008) drew from consisted of American presidential speeches of the 20th century (beginning in 1901 and ending in 2000). The initial measures of this study involved a measurement of charisma ranging from 1 (not charismatic at all) to 7 (extremely charismatic), and ten political scientists from two universities were asked to rank each president based on the sample of speeches. Then a content analysis was conducted to analyze the presidents who were characterized as charismatic. Seyranian and Bligh’s (2008) hypothesis stating that charismatic leaders would use more imagery than non-charismatic leaders was confirmed. The significance of these two studies is their ability to highlight that leaders perceived as charismatic speak with a rhetoric of an abstract, religious, poetic, and imaginative nature.

Through rhetorical analysis, this thesis incorporates a critical perspective, similar to that presented by Campbell (1990). It seeks to unpack the abstract rhetoric used in inaugural addresses through analysis of the symbolic appeals and attending to their purpose within the speech itself. Joan Leach (2000), in a discussion of qualitative methodology, writes that rhetorical scholars seek to unpack discourses to understand why they are persuasive.

Traditionally, according to Leach (2000), “rhetorical analysis critiqued oral discourses such as those in law course, parliament or the political arena” (p. 209). Recalling the language of Bitzer

(1968), Leach (2000) claims these rhetorical events are in a response to some exigence, and such exigence must be contextualized in order to understand the persuasive act.

An inaugural address carries a significant amount of weight; it is ritualistic as well as individual and unique to each President. It signifies the farewell of televised debates, pervasive political ads, cocktail party arguments, bumper stickers, and all of the symbols of a campaign that is then replaced by this event to unify the nation under its new leader. Wright (1988) engages in discussion of the purposes and qualities of metaphor within these texts. An argument discussed by Wright (1988) relevant specifically to the rhetorical analysis of Religious references in Inaugural Addresses is the idea that individuals are equipped with the capacities to determine truth through our range of experiences. Hence, when the President appeals to a spiritual or Christian reference, the Christian citizen would recall his/her notions of God and truth through the words of this particular President's use of spiritual and/or biblical metaphor.

Further, Emrich et al. (2001) operationalize imagery as "the extent to which a word quickly and easily arouses a sensory experience such as a word or sound" (p. 529). To illustrate this, Emrich et al. (2001) refer to Martin Luther King Jr. and the extent to which "I have an idea," would have been considerably less impactful than "I have a dream," simply due to the imaginative nature of the word dream and its capacities to recall emotions, feelings, and thoughts to the listeners' mind upon hearing those words. These leaders who use words that evoke emotions, pictures, and other sensations, Emrich et al. (2001) maintain, connect more directly to their followers. Taken one step further, the President who can use words, terms, or phrases that call forth feelings of faith, spirituality, trust, and hope, through references to God or Religion, reach more directly into the hearts and minds of the nation's Christians.

Of the four hypotheses forwarded by Emrich et al. (2001), hypotheses 1 and 2 which state that the higher the proportion of image-base rhetoric in a President's speech, the higher his charisma ratings and his perceived greatness respectively, are the most intriguing for the purposes of this project because if image-based rhetoric influences the perceived charisma of the president, then the specific use of biblical imagery or God metaphor could potentially have an impact of the perceived charisma of the president as well. Moreover, as a president relies upon words that evoke emotions in his audience, Domke and Coe's (2010) God Strategy would argue that the uses of spiritual and God related imagery and metaphor strengthen his perception among not only those who identify themselves as Christians, but also those who identify themselves with belief in a form of Deity, and furthermore, to those who believe that the United States was established and built upon God. Therefore, although the incorporation of religious rhetoric into a public speech could potentially be authentic, this thesis agrees with Ericson's (1980) claim that the incorporation of God-centered and/or biblical rhetoric is a strategic and carefully executed political act and not necessarily a genuine reflection of religious belief or reliance on the God they claim to follow. With this assumption, an analysis of the rhetorical use of these religious references contributes to presidential rhetoric as a whole and inaugural address scholarship specifically insofar as it serves to provide research, analyses, and inferences toward a more in-depth understanding of the specific relationship between God and the United States demonstrated in this important genre of speeches.

Inaugural Address and God

Religious issues have previously and recently gathered attention in political analyses. Kaylor (2011) discusses this attention with respect to George W. Bush's 2000 and 2004

overwhelming support from regular and frequent church attendees. As previously noted, Toolin (1983) recognized the prevalence of references to God in Presidential Inaugural addresses and sought to content analyze forty-nine addresses from George Washington (Inaugurated in 1789) to Ronald Reagan (Inaugurated in 1981). Toolin (1983) choose inaugural addresses because it was an under-researched area in the genre of Religion and politics. The basic issue she addresses is whether or not religious references could be found in these addresses. The unit of analysis was a specific reference to a deity and particular Judeo-Christian religious content (e.g., references to the Old or New testament prophesies or stories). Secondly, Toolin (1983) addressed the nature and characteristics of these references as what she calls “civil religion” (p.41) defined as, a self-congratulatory relationship between politics and religion. Her findings confirmed the presence of references to a Deity as evidence for the existence of this civil religion, or particular relationship between politics and God. The characteristics of this civil religion involve culture building, culture affirmation, and legitimation, and they are interwoven with themes of destiny, freedom, and sacrifice (Toolin, 1983). Toolin (1983) specifically declares the inaugural address as “a very particular picture of American civil religion” (p. 47) as it is the place for a president to appeal to, comfort, and encourage the nation in a highly ritualized manner.

Scholars in the field of political communication recognize the value of the Inaugural address. Campbell and Jamieson (1985) call them a subspecies of what Aristotle calls epideictic speech. In Book 1 of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*, the concept of epideictic rhetoric is established as the most problematic type; in such speeches, “praise corrects, modifies, or strengthens audience’s belief about civic virtues” (p. 47). Campbell and Jamieson (1985) classify presidential inaugurals as this type of speech because “they are delivered on ceremonious occasions, fuse past and future in present contemplation, affirm of praise shared principles that will guide the

incoming administration, ask the audience to gaze upon traditional values, employ an elegant, literary language and rely on heightening of effect” (p. 395). The article individually defends each of these claims and reiterates the unique nature of the Inaugural address as both speech and ritual art. The authors acknowledge outliers in the Inaugural tradition, variances predominantly representative within incumbent presidents (Campbell & Jamieson 1985). Finally, Campbell and Jamieson (1985) conclude with a reaffirmation of the abstract and eloquent nature of the inaugural address with a quote from Franklin D. Roosevelt calling the United States “a covenant with ourselves, that covenant between the executive and the nation that is the essence of democratic government” (p. 408). This covenant is a trust between the citizens and the president: the citizens trust the president to lead and communicate that leadership while the president trusts the citizens to support his/her leadership. As it is the first speech spoken by a new president, this covenant is manifest in the inaugural address.

Coe and Domke (2006) further the critical look at presidential discourse by specifically examining U.S. presidential religious language and patterns. The authors, similar to Toolin (1983), reference Bellah (1970) as a seminal scholar in the genre of religion and politics who discussed the extent to which Religion related sociologically with individuals by appealing to their perception of the world. The specific trend Coe and Domke (2006) attend to is the rise of Christian conservatives into the political domain as powerful voters moving from a marginal to an ascendant role. Positing Reagan as the clear spearhead of the trend toward new religious patterns in public address, Coe and Domke (2006) further hypothesize that George W. Bush elevated the trend again in 2005.

Methodologically, Coe and Domke (2006) content analyzed the State of the Union and Inaugural addresses of Franklin Roosevelt through George W. Bush. The unit of analysis was the

single word and coding involved seeking references to God, freedom/liberty, and the linking of God to freedom/liberty (Coe and Domke 2006). The results revealed two noteworthy trends; first, “references to a higher power increased beginning with the Reagan presidency” and second, “the usage of freedom and liberty shows two distinct peak periods...first, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy...and the second, during the presidencies of Reagan and Bush” (Coe & Domke, 2006, p. 318). As a concluding statement, Coe and Domke (2006) assert, “the contemporary ascendancy of religious conservatives in the United States political sphere all but guarantees that political leaders will make it a point to speak their language” (p. 325).

Domke and Coe’s (2010) book, *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America*, maintains that references to God have intentional purposes within Presidential public address. Marking Reagan as the onset of religious and political connection in United States presidential rhetoric, Domke and Coe (2010) first acknowledge that modern political communication is “carefully scripted and rehearsed, with meticulous management of every detail” (p. 4). The assertion that political communications are meticulously managed and attended to is reinforced the above mentioned work by Crowel (1958) and also by Houck (2003) whose analysis of the eight drafts of Roosevelt’s 1933 inaugural address, represented by three outline drafts and five full versions of the speech, displays for Roosevelt specifically, the careful attention to rhetorical detail present in composition of an inaugural speech.

Domke and Coe’s (2010) term “The God Strategy” refers to the “calculated, deliberate use of partisan faith” (p. 7). This use appears in public speeches given by Presidential candidates and elects alike to both rally voters and unite citizens. The strategy has four elements: speaking the language of the faithful, fusing God and country by linking America with divine will, embracing iconic religious elements, and engaging in morality politics (Domke & Coe, 2010).

Together these four elements define religious politics, and according to Domke and Coe (2010), “both major parties have been using them for advantage” (p. 19). Although GOP data cited by the authors typically aligns evangelical Christians with the Republican party (56% Republican, 35% Democrat), Domke and Coe (2010) do not exempt Democratic candidates from invoking this strategy even though the Christian ideologies are typically associated with Republicans.

The God Strategy cites specific instances when candidates incorporated religious language into their formal engagements. Specifically, Domke and Coe (2010) quote George W. Bush at the Republican Primary Debate in 1999 as responding to the question, “Which political philosopher or thinker do you identify with and why” with “Christ, because he changed my heart” (p. 29). The applause of the audience at this response, Domke and Coe (2010) assert, shifted the nature of that particular debate from then on, prompting Orrin Hatch and Gary Bauer to follow suit as identifying Jesus as their motivating force. This, the authors claim, is the power of the God strategy.

Recognizing the power of Biblical references and the influence of incorporating God in a political speech, this thesis aims specifically to rhetorically analyze the Inaugural addresses of each president from Roosevelt to Obama in order to identify the relationship between presidential rhetoric and God. This thesis will evaluate the genre of inaugural addresses delivered from 1933-2009, as opposed to an in-depth analysis of just one, in order to provide a context for the trends in this Inaugural-God relationship across a span of more than 80 years. These parameters were chosen specifically in order to warrant a scope of analysis before and after Presidents Reagan, Carter, and Clinton, who have been suggested to be large proponents of spiritual abstract rhetoric. The next chapter will outline the methodological framework of rhetorical analysis that this thesis will utilize in order to answer its research question: what is the

relationship between God and the United States as demonstrated in the presidential inaugural addresses from 1933-2009?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD OF RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I will contextualize the specific methodological framework I will use to conduct this analysis. This section of my thesis will begin with what it is not. Much of the current scholarship concerning inaugural addresses utilizes the methodological framework of content analysis. This is not a content analysis. I will not be counting words and presenting statistical data. The inquiry into the relationship between the United States and God, reflected in the inaugural address is not a question of how many times the term “God” appears in a speech, or an investigation into the particular faith of each president. It is, however, a uniquely achieved perspective of the dynamic and ever-changing relationship between the United States and God derived from an analysis of the first inaugural address of each elected president delivered across a span of eighty-nine years.

In this chapter, first, I will discuss and justify my perspective of the inaugural address as a genre insofar as it can be analyzed and discussed within its own parameters. What I mean by this claim is an inaugural address is different from other presidential speeches and it should be researched independently from those other presidential speeches. Moreover, the inaugural addresses of different presidents can be compared to and from each other, even though they are delivered by different individuals attending to unique environments, cultural dynamics, and domestic issues, because of the specific form and genre of an inaugural address. Then, I will outline the modern rhetorical perspective I position this argument from, and to conclude this chapter, I will discuss the specific manner in which I will engage in a genre study of the

inaugural addresses delivered from 1933-2009, in order to discover the relationship between God and the United States as is reflected in the rhetoric of the president of the United States' inaugural speech. I will do this by outlining the dynamic and specific uses God-reference, biblical metaphor, or religious analogy within the content of the first inaugural address delivered by each president from 1933-2009.

Inaugural Address as a Genre

Roland Barthes (1977) positions the text as an individual entity with a life separated from its author; this thesis analyzes each inaugural address as an individual text separated from its initial author and existing within the life of the genre. Just as Leach (2000) recalls Bitzer's claim for a contextualization of a rhetorical situation, I situate the inaugural address as a genre that serves to unite the nation under the newly inaugurated U. S. president.

Campbell and Jamieson (1985) discuss the significance of the inaugural address as a discourse and pose the question: "Can inaugural addresses be treated as a group? Are they a distinct type, a rhetorical genre?" (p. 194). The authors resolve that the inaugural addresses are a subspecies of epideictic rhetoric, recalling the past and speculating about the future, while employing a noble literary style (p.195). Therefore, each individual inaugural address is part of the larger whole: the genre of these special epideictic speeches known as the inaugural addresses.

Campbell (1990) describes genre as a classifying term that can be used for the purposes of inaugural addresses within presidential public address scholarship as a way to provide illuminating insights otherwise unavailable. The great benefit of positioning public address scholarship from the perspective of inaugural address as a genre is the freedom to find a point of continuity among the years of growth and change. When viewing each particular body of

presidential rhetoric within its own genre, as Campbell (1990) suggests, the critic is empowered to locate change and flexibility in order to “make an enduring statement about the nation” (p. 12).

If then we are to study the inaugural address as a genre, it is essential to understand exactly what are the implications of this classification. Campbell and Jamieson (1978) identify generic criticism as an “orderly means of close textual analysis” (p. 13). The authors first highlight Zyskind (1950) and Windt (1987) as deductive scholars, and position Hart (1987) opposingly inductive. This inductive form of generic study provides the scholar with the tools to “survey a variety of discourses to see if there are clusters of symbolic acts” (Campbell & Jamieson, 1987, p.13).

Miller (2003) describes the genre as a “cultural artefact” (p. 69) as it serves a similar function to a scholar as an artifact does to an anthropologist. The genre provides information about knowledge, economics, aesthetics, political, and religious beliefs, according to Miller (2003), and in this case, the genre of the inaugural address provides insight into each president’s conceptualizations of the past, perceptions of the present, and vision for the future of the United States. Furthermore, Lemke (1994) outlined genre studies as a tool and resource for understanding meanings behind words.

As a tool for rhetorical study, the genre provides meaningful contexts to discourses. Campbell and Jamieson (1978) eloquently describe rhetorical acts as “born into a symbolic/rhetorical context as well as into a historical/political milieu” (p.13) and the genre that emerges in such a setting is a complex of elements, styles, and situational characteristics. The goal then of situating the inaugural address as a genre for rhetorical analysis in this thesis is to construct, in Chapter 4, an understanding of the God-references and biblical symbols found in

the inaugural speeches and to discover both patterns and similarities in and between each discourse of this genre.

A Modern Perspective

Scholars of presidential rhetoric have tended to work within the modern schema, Tulis (1996) writes, as contemporary politics is a layered text located between theory and constitutional understandings (pp. 4-5). Hart and Kendall (1996) further Tulis' claim of modernism as a tendency of presidential rhetoric scholars by asserting that "to understand contemporary American politicians...one must reckon with modernism" (p. 85). Despite its opponents, modernism remained powerful and "whether Dixiecrats of Free-soilers, whether Republicans or Democrats, American politicians have long been modernists" (Hart & Kendall, 1996, p. 85).

To return here to the opening reference to Alexis de Tocqueville and his early nineteenth century observations of the United States, Hart and Kendall (1996) write: "if Tocqueville is to be believed, even the earliest of Americans embraced the possibility of human advancement, the bounties of science and technology, appreciation of corporate efficiencies and, to a lesser extent bureaucratic systems of government" (pp. 85-86). Modernism is both pervasive and unyielding as it thrives in metaphor and commodification, but above all it is efficient (Hart & Kendall, 1996, p.93).

"Rhetorical transactions are not things; they are processes" (Black, 1978, p. 135). Black's (1978) intriguing words display a key element of modern criticism: these discourses we read and study are not static things, but movements that change, develop, and evolve. When scholars analyze a text, a speech, or a discourse, they are not looking at a simply thing, words to see on a

page or to hear in the air, but a living movement. Medhurst (1996) recognizes this as well when he discusses the nature of human imperfection and the way in which this dictates rhetoric as an art form rather than a science; everything is variable. The power of the rhetorician is in his/her ability to discern the “intellectual powers displayed” (p. xvi). As Medhurst (1996) describes, “to be a rhetorical being is to live in a world of constant change...to live a rhetorical life is to be at home with the vicissitudes of human existence” (p. 219). Scholars of rhetoric understand content through dimensions of language and forms of style from the interpretive lens of humanity. The critic’s analysis of a rhetorical transaction, returning again to Black (1978), “is merely a way of talking about and understanding it” (p. 135). The modern rhetorical critic recognizes that there are analogous intrinsic elements in all criticism.

“All rhetoric is influenced by prior rhetoric, all rhetorical acts resemble other acts,” Campbell and Jameison (1978, p. 22) assert, aligning with the modern schema. With a critical perspective, comparisons and classifications are integral to the process. These classifications, contrasts, and re-definitions form the basis for strategic evaluations. However, Campbell and Jameison (1978) suggest that a modern rhetorical generic approach does bring some expectations on the critic: a close textual analysis, for instance, as well as a heightened awareness of the relationship between power and rhetoric.

An Inaugural Address Genre Study of United States Religiosity

For the analysis of inaugural addresses, the culture from which and for whom the words were composed is the United States, a nation build upon a foundation of faith in God (Holmes, 2006). As such, religious references are native to rhetorical analysis of political communication. This thesis seeks to discover the relationship between God and the nation through a rhetorical

analysis of inaugural addresses. This analysis will be done through the modern rhetorical lens and generic perspective discussed above. This method provides the freedom to recognize the dynamic nature of the inaugural genre, seek comparisons and classifications of references to God and biblical analogy, and draw inferences concerning their reflection of United States religiosity from the findings by locating and describing the rhetorical function of those metaphors and biblical references.

First, I will closely read the first individual inaugural address delivered by each president from 1933-2009. What this means is I will gather the text of each inaugural address in question, beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt's in 1933, and first closely read each one individually because, as Campbell and Jameison (1987) suggest, a close reading of the text is the first step in a genre study. I will not be examining the accompanying video content because this thesis is specifically concerned with the linguistic rhetoric of the text itself, rather than the rhetorical elements included in vocal tone or body language.

Second, I will discover any references to God, a deity, spirituality, or biblical analogy present in the speeches. As a student trained in religious rhetoric, I will seek both individual words as well as phrases in order to locate any deistic or biblical references. A deistic or biblical reference will be categorized by first, explicit use of the word "God," and second, a use of analogous language referring to a deity, power, or being above, for example, 'Almighty' or 'Creator'. The use of deistic language has been present in inaugural addresses since George Washington; however, it is important to locate both the actual use of "God," as well as the use of analogous language in order to locate all references. George Washington specifically incorporated the use of the term, "Great Author," in reference to God, and it wasn't until the fifth president, James Monroe, that the actual use of the word "God" rather than a metaphorical term

was present in an inaugural address (Ericson, 1980). Therefore, since inaugural addresses even from our very first presidents incorporated a variety of terms in reference to God, it is important when searching for deistic references to identify both the explicit and metaphorical references. Moreover, in order to understand the relationship between the United States and God, it is also necessary to locate references to biblical principles and stories because the use of such references also communicated a relationship between the president, the United States, and God since the Old Testament stories of the Bible are understood as the primary text for God-believing people of both Christian and Jewish faith, and the New Testament for Christians specifically. Biblical references can be identified as any phrase that either specifically quotes a Biblical passage or one that alludes to a biblical story or principle; for example, a particular Psalm may be incorporated as a way to communicate strength in times of trial, or an Old Testament story of perseverance may be included to motivate citizens to look forward in hope because God perseveres his chosen people.

After these references are identified in each individual speech, I will compare and categorize them, unpacking their meaning and function within the speech as well as drawing connections between a biblical reference and its coinciding biblical passage so that the analogy can be easily contextualized and more deeply understood. Finally, I will discuss the findings in terms of trends and their durations as well as comparisons, categorizations, similarities, and differences between inaugural address and their deistic and biblical references across the seventy-six years of United States presidential inaugural addresses, drawing inferences and conclusions from the findings toward answering the research question: what is the relationship between God and the United States as demonstrated in the presidential inaugural addresses from 1933-2009?

Concluding Remarks

The next two chapters of this thesis will present an individual analysis of each first inaugural address delivered by the presidents from 1933 to 2009 followed by a comparative analysis and existence of and varying trends in the religious references within each of the inaugural addresses analyzed. I will present the conclusions, categorizations, and inferences that will emerge from the findings with respect to their mirror-nature of United States religiosity. By presenting both the individual discoveries from each unique inaugural discussed as well as the aggregate inferences and connections drawn from the twelve speeches, this thesis will provide a holistic understanding of the inaugural address as it serves to reflect the relationship between God and the United States.

CHAPTER 4

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS

The presidential inaugural address is a discourse whose significance all recognize but few praise
-Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (1990, p. 14)

Vision & Overview

The vision of this thesis developed rather inductively whereas the focus of analysis matured out of the literature. If the President of the United States seeks to connect with, reunite, please, persuade, and inspire the nation from within his/her inaugural speech, then his/her speech must inherently be a reflection of the audience's desires. Therefore, we may view the inaugural address as a mirror of the nation itself and its contents reflective of the current state of the country. With respect to religiosity, then, the rhetorical uses and incorporations of references to God and biblical metaphor can be said to reflect the nation's current relationship with God and the bible. As discussed in Chapter 2, Campbell (1990) classifies the inaugural genre within Aristotle's epideictic rhetoric because of its general purposes of unifying the audience, rehearsing values, setting forth principles, demonstrating requirements, and urging contemplation as well as its ceremonial nature. The functions of references to God and Scripture have a persuasive element within the purposes Campbell (1990) described insofar as they provide power as well as emotional/spiritual connections between president and citizens in pursuit of these persuasive goals. This chapter will first present its individual findings chronologically, followed by the comparisons and categorizations found across the individual speeches, in order to represent the trends over the last 80 years.

Roosevelt

March 4th, 1933, is the last time an inaugural address would be delivered on this particular date. As the smell of morning rain fills the air, an American family gathers around the Zenith 706 wood tube radio to listen to the words of their new president. The immortal words, “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself” (para. 1) echoed through the airwaves. In the midst of the Great Depression, Congress was divided and the American people were confused and afraid (Daughton, 1993). Roosevelt approached head on, with candor, the current economic difficulties as well as those he perceived to lie ahead, thanking God that these challenges are only material. “Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment” (para. 3), he said with honesty and distress. And then, the speech took a turn toward gratitude as President Roosevelt referenced the Old Testament story in Exodus 10, “we are stricken by no plague of locusts” (para. 4). He then added, “we still have much to be thankful for” (para. 4), alluding to the fact that although the United States is struggling, it could be much worse. Following this recognition of the trials the Nation is currently facing, Roosevelt ushers in his call “for action, and action now” (para. 9). “This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously” (para. 10) Roosevelt spoke as he proceeded to unpack his plans for putting America back to work. This outline of his plan led directly into a praise of the United States Constitution and Roosevelt’s desire to reunite the nation and finally, the speech concludes with a plea for the blessing, protection, and guidance of God.

Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered a twenty-six paragraph speech boasting both direct exclamations, pleas, and praise to God as well as embedded biblical references. Very early on, in the second paragraph, Roosevelt briefly offers thanks to God that the challenges and difficulties the nation is facing at the time are “only material things,” concerning means and finances rather

than perhaps a distress of health concerns. “We are stricken by no plague of locusts” (para. 4) Roosevelt claims, referencing specifically the Judeo-Christian story of God delivering his people out of slavery in Egypt, only after a series of plagues, as noted above, Exodus 10:1-20. The third series of plagues God unleashed upon Egypt when the Pharaoh would not agree to release the Jewish slaves involved a plague of locusts. “For tomorrow I will bring a swarm of locusts on your country. They will cover the land so that you won’t be able to see the ground. They will devour what little is left of your crops after the hailstorm, including all the trees growing in the fields. They will overrun your palaces and the homes of your officials and all the houses in Egypt. Never in the history of Egypt have your ancestors seen a plague like this one!” (Exodus 10:4-6 New Living Translation). Through the incorporation of this biblical reference, Roosevelt juxtaposed the state of the nation’s economy with vile plagues of death and therefore positioned the economic situation faced by the United States as a lesser struggle.

Following the reference to this biblical story, Roosevelt proclaims, “compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered because they believed and were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for” (para. 4). The particular order of this statement is curious because it could naturally be read to reference American forefathers and the trials they faced, or it could be read because of its juxtaposition to the reference of the Jews in Exodus, to refer to our Jewish forefathers who suffered great burdens because of their beliefs, and yet, were not afraid.

Paragraph 5 of Roosevelt’s address includes a specific quote from the book of Proverbs, which could easily be overlooked. In the conclusion of the paragraph, concerned with lending money, relying on credit, following false leaders, and self-seeking, Roosevelt spoke, “they have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish” (para. 5). This sentence directly correlates to the eighteenth verse of the twenty-ninth Proverb, which reads, “where there is no

vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18 King James Version). The King James Study Bible and Strong’s Concordance connect the Hebrew term used here for “vision” to 2 Kings 6:17 and Isaiah 22:1. Each of these references discusses vision not as the ability to see, but rather as a revelation from God, or prophetic vision. Therefore, for Roosevelt to mirror the language from this particular Proverb creates the implication of need for divine revelation in order to achieve success.

The next paragraphs incorporate biblical terms such as the use of the phrase “high seats in the temple” in paragraph 6 and references to the Judeo-Christian concept of ministering rather than being ministered to. Furthermore, paragraphs 16 and 17 embrace the concept of loving one’s neighbor as oneself. Jesus spoke these words himself in the synoptic gospels, Mark 12:13, Matthew 22:39, and Luke 10:28, and the concept also appears in Paul’s letters, “don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too” (Philippians 2:4 New Living Translation), suggesting that the United States should emulate the character of Jesus and of His followers. This implication further displays the relationship between United States citizens and the Bible insofar as the president is encouraging his nation to embrace the biblical concept of loving one’s neighbor and putting others before oneself as part of their identity.

Finally, Roosevelt concluded his speech with a plea to God for blessing on the Nation: “May he protect each and every one of us. May He guide me in the days to come” (para. 26). These are common pleas present in the book of Psalms; Psalm 16 and 23 ask for God’s guidance, and Psalm 18, 23, 25, 31, 32, 40, 71, and 86 ask for God’s protection. The concept of asking for God’s protection also arises in Genesis 28 and 2 Samuel 22 in the Old Testament, and Acts 26 in the New Testament. Concluding on this note would resonate with Christians and Jews who may recognize the specific language, and also with any listener who believes in some Creator-Deity

capable of exerting a hand of guidance and protection. Incorporating a common plea to God for blessing suggests that Roosevelt was familiar with Scripture himself, as well as validates its words as fit for his own use. Furthermore, this plea communicated Roosevelt's acknowledgement of God's hand in the good fortune, safety, well-being, and blessing of the United States. Houck (2002) described Roosevelt's inaugural words as having taken their origins in the Divine. In just twenty minutes, according to Houck (2002), "Franklin Roosevelt had managed with 1,929 words to persuade many of his near-divine status and calling" (p. 14). Roosevelt's request for guidance further communicates humility from the new President, as he relies on God's guidance, and ends the speech in a prayerful way (as many of the Psalms are prayers), which contributes to the ceremonial nature of the inaugural event.

Truman

On January 20, 1949, former county judge, Senator, and Vice President Harry S. Truman delivered his inaugural address. Truman held the popular vote for the duration of his campaign and was the last president to take office who had not attended college (Donovan, 1982). This inaugural event was unique because Truman had taken his first oath of office on April 12, 1945, upon the death of President Roosevelt. President Truman took his second oath of office on two Bibles- his own personal Bible, which he took his first oath of office on, and a Gutenberg Bible donated by the citizens of Independence, Missouri (www.inaugural.sentate.gov/swearingin/bibles). Many families gathered around their home radios to hear Truman's inaugural ceremony, and others viewed it on their 12" black and white RCA Pavillion Television (Baran, 2012). As a President, Truman was "grounded in domestic issues but entirely lacking in experience, not to

say expertise in foreign affairs” (Donovan, 1982, p. 14). Ironically, in the midst of the Cold War, Truman’s time in office was dominated by foreign affairs (Donovan, 1982).

President Truman began his speech with humility. For seventy-one paragraphs, Truman addresses American identity, communism, economic recovery, and world peace. In his second paragraph, Truman claims to need the “help and prayers” (para. 2) of the Nation, as well as their “encouragement and support” (para. 2). This brief request aligns the prayers of the people with help, encouragement, and support, validating it as a way to assist and aid the President in his time as president. The use of this particular term includes persons of all faiths with some connection to spirituality; therefore, he includes and appeals to the Judeo-Christian community as well as any spiritual person of any faith. It spoke to the identity of the Judeo-Christian American as a person of prayer, but also served to include all spiritual persons. Therefore, Truman was able to connect with not only those who observe Judeo-Christian practices, any American who recognizes a form of Deity, but also those who do not recognize a Deity or practice prayer, by including the request for encouragement and support. This suggests that Truman’s rhetorical use of these terms served to appeal to the identity of praying Americans as well as those who do not.

Further into the address, Truman incorporates the evangelical ideology of proclaiming to the world the principles of faith and reaffirms the “faith which has inspired this Nation from the beginning” (para. 7). By aligning the United States here with faith Truman builds a foundation for his later connection of democracy and faith in God. Further in paragraph 7, Truman incorporates a second connection of the United States and God by associating the constitutional aspect of all men as created equal with the justification of such an idea as all men having been created “in the image of God.” In paragraph 21, Truman continues his association of democracy

and God by describing the democracy in the United States as “material well-being, human dignity, and the right to believe in and worship God.” This particular claim follows a series of parallel declarative statements about the nature of democracy and communism therefore, it appeals to the democratic identity as having well-being, dignity, and the right to worship God. Therefore, the appeal to the American political right to worship God calls forth the conceptualization of the United States having been built upon religious freedom. Still recovering from World War II and with the Cold War on the horizon, Truman positioned the American freedom of religion as a dominant virtue.

“From this faith we will not be moved,” Truman proclaims in paragraph 8, which rings of Psalm 62:6 wherein the Psalmist David wrote, “He is my rock and my salvation, I shall not be moved” (King James Version). This improves Truman’s perceived power because his strength comes from God and God’s power cannot be moved. The proclamation however, uses the term “we” when Truman speaks of faith as opposed to the Psalmist use of the term “I”. Thus, he not only made a statement about his own faith, power, and strength having come from God, but that all Americans have that same strong faith, power, and strength from God that the Psalmist David referenced in the Old Testament. This use of specific biblical language served the purpose of supporting his argument in the previous paragraphs, that all men are created equal in the image of God. This claim of equality having stemmed from creation brings a need of belief in God as Creator, or else the equality does not exist in the form Truman described. Moreover, having followed this statement with the claim of solid faith, from which we will not be moved, Truman provides the necessary support for his equality plea, that the United States was built upon faith in God and that faith will never be shaken. This statement of strong stability serves to confirm the

strength of the United States as a nation that will not be damaged by the threat of communism or war.

The inaugural address returns to God again at the conclusion of the speech, from paragraphs 66 to 71. “Our allies are the millions who hunger and thirst after righteousness” Truman states in paragraph 66. This claim echoes the longest speech delivered by Jesus in the New Testament, the Sermon on the Mount found in the book of Matthew chapters 5-7. In this speech, Jesus makes a series of claims about those who shall be blessed; Matthew 5:6 reads, “blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (New International version). This alignment of Jesus’ beatitudes and U.S. citizens served to make parallel the blessings of those who serve God to the blessings of the citizen’s. This association further serves to connect the identity of an American to the identity of a Judeo-Christian and not to the identity of the Soviets.

In the final words of Truman’s speech, he claims the Nation’s “advancement toward where man’s freedom is secure” (para. 70). This secure place will be reached, according to the President, as long as the Nation is “steadfast in our faith in the Almighty” (para. 70). This term, “Almighty” appears a total of 58 times in the Bible as a reference to God and because of its significant presence in the Bible, it is as a legitimate synonymous term to the name of God used in an inaugural speech. Truman concludes with these final words, “To that end we will devote our strength, our resources, and our firmness of resolve, with God’s help, the future of mankind will be assured in a world of justice, harmony, and peace” (para. 71). This final claim brings the inaugural address to a close with the same spirit as it began: Truman will lead with God’s strength and help. And in this leadership, God will lead America to providence and freedom, righteousness and justice. Overall, Truman’s address references specific bible verses twice,

biblical ideologies ten times, and specifically references God three times, which suggests a significant use of God in the overall structure of his inaugural speech which implies that Truman recognizes God and Scripture both as motivational and persuasive rhetorical tools for the inaugural speech.

Eisenhower

On Tuesday January 20, 1953, Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower took his oath of office with the Bible George Washington used at the very first presidential Inauguration, as well as the one his own mother gifted him upon graduation from the Military Academy at West Point (www.inaugural.sentate.gov/swearingin/bibles). Eisenhower began his inaugural speech by asking his listeners to bow their heads and join him in prayer with these words:

“Almighty God, as we stand here at this moment my future associates in the executive branch of government join me in beseeching that Thou will make full and complete our dedication to the service of the people in this throng, and their fellow citizens everywhere. Give us, we pray, the power to discern clearly right from wrong, and allow all our words and actions to be governed thereby, and by the laws of this land. Especially we pray that our concern shall be for all the people regardless of station, race or calling. May cooperation be permitted and be the mutual aim of those who, under the concepts of our constitution, hold to differing political faiths; so that all may work for the good of our beloved country and Thy glory. Amen” (paras. 2-4).

By beginning the address with a prayer, Eisenhower frames his entire speech with a reverence to God and the insinuation that he will be making decisions or right and wrong from God’s direction and discernment. Positioning his leadership in this subservient light both highlights

Eisenhower's humility as well as places any future decisions he would make under the umbrella of having been led by God. In doing so, Eisenhower created a support for his future plans and decisions by presenting them as God-designed. His prayer incorporates specific King James Version language of "Thou" and "Thy," as well as an initial address to "Almighty God." The use of this specific biblical language creates a nuanced degree of separation between Eisenhower's natural language and the biblically charged terms. Therefore, since the prayer has a different tone than the subsequent parts of the speech, it stood separated and illuminated in its uniqueness.

Before listing and describing nine principles Eisenhower requests the nation to be guided by, he lavishes the listeners with testimony to the faith of the founding fathers and the nature of this faith that as a nation, we must continue to uphold. This address reads more naturally as a sermon than a presidential speech, riddled with pleas of God's guidance as well as the proclamation for the renewal of faith. Eisenhower spoke, "we are called as a people to give testimony in the sight of the world to our faith that the future shall belong to the free" (para. 7). This ceremony is more than one man swearing into office, the President claims, it is a historic event "in the presence of God" (para. 7). Eisenhower recognizes the relationship of God and the United States very early in his speech by describing this ceremony as an event worthy of God's oversight.

Eisenhower, like the presidents before him, calls upon God's guidance in the days to come (para. 10) as he reflects upon man's journey from darkness toward light. Like his predecessor Harry Truman, in the days to come, Eisenhower also faced the daunting task of uniting the Nation in the face of the Cold War that continued to take hold of the United States. Therefore, Eisenhower's inaugural speech required elements of strength, optimism, and positioning the United States as good and righteous actors in the Cold War. Eisenhower uses

rhetoric revolving around darkness and light when he spoke about what is on the horizon for the United States; the literal and metaphorical uses of darkness and light are present in the Bible from the first book, Genesis, to the last, Revelation. When God creates the world in Genesis 1, he saw goodness in light and separated the light from the darkness (Genesis 1:4 & Genesis 1:18). In Exodus, the armies of Egypt and Israel, of evil and of good, were separated by darkness and light (Exodus 14:20), and the great, faithful, Job speaks of darkness and light six times throughout his trials. The prophet Isaiah speaks of a journey out of darkness and toward light (Isaiah 59:9), and Jesus himself spoke, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12, New International Version). Osborn (1967) discussed archetypal metaphors such as darkness and light as common in rhetorical discourse. Light, according to Osborn (1967), relates to “the fundamental struggle for survival and development” (p. 117), whereas darkness represents fear of the unknown and utter vulnerability. Eisenhower briefly used this concept again in paragraph 22 to align freedom with light, and slavery with darkness. Therefore, this correlation of light and freedom as well as the proclamation of a journey from darkness toward light in paragraph eleven draws natural relationship between the American journey, to the Judeo-Christian journey of life. This association supports the reinforcement of the relationship between American identity and Judeo-Christian identity as their journeys and purposes are laid parallel in the darkness and light metaphors.

“We must proclaim anew our faith,” Eisenhower asserts in his fifteenth paragraph, because, “this faith is the abiding creed of our fathers. It is our faith in the deathless dignity of man, governed by eternal moral and natural laws” (para. 15). This element of the speech speaks to the eternal life granted to those who follow Jesus (John 3:16). The rights of men, Eisenhower proclaims, are merely “gifts of the Creator” (para. 16), and as such, this statement declares that

free Americans owe Him their lives. If these rights we have are merely gifts of God, then the citizens listening owe their freedom to God, their liberty to God, their justice to God and “this faith rules [their] whole way of life” (para. 18).

In paragraph eighteen, Eisenhower again recalled specifically the life and teachings of Jesus. He proclaims that the leaders of the United States are “not to rule but to serve” (para. 18) which Jesus, in Luke 22:26 says to his disciples as he eats with them the last supper, that greatest shall be the least, and “the one who rules should be like the one who serves” (New International Version). In this statement, Eisenhower aligns his leadership style with a servant leadership style, just as Jesus would want of him.

Concerning the faith of the nation, Eisenhower stated it must be consciously renewed “in the watchfulness of a Divine Providence” (para. 19), and in this faith, the citizens can trust that the decisions and changes are being overseen by God. In paragraphs 32 through 43, Eisenhower described nine principles that will guide the leaders. These principles of peace, decency, and economic health will be achieved, as Eisenhower describes, not through material strength but through “spiritual strength” (para. 49). This type of strength was also utilized by the Apostle Paul as he suffers ridicule, injury, and prison; in his letter to the church in Philippi, Paul famously writes, “for I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13, New Living Translation). By drawing a connection between himself and the Apostle Paul, Eisenhower also aligns his indescribable divine strength with that of Paul’s as he faced imprisonment and ridicule. Therefore, Eisenhower positions himself as having no fear for the struggles that he may find in the years ahead as president, because he has the same strength of God that carried Paul through prison and pain.

This faithful way of living and of leading is “more than an escape from death, it is a way of life” (Eisenhower, para. 52). Again, Eisenhower recalls the notion of eternal life, but in these final words of his address it is expanded: this faith he speaks about in this speech is more than a means for eternal life, it is a way of conducting life here on this earth: “it is more than hope for the weary, it is a hope for the brave” (para. 52). This mention of faith as a lifestyle again positions faith as an element of identity, reinforcing the connection of American identity with Judeo-Christian identity through faith as a lifestyle. And finally to conclude his inaugural speech, Eisenhower expressed hope that this work to be done will be done with bravery, charity, and “prayer to Almighty God” (para. 53). This final claim returned to his opening prayer and proclamation that it will be through God’s help and guidance that he would serve as president, which again, positioned his presidency as one of humility and his decisions with the support and providence of God.

Kennedy

Heavy snow fell in Washington the night before the inauguration of John Fitzgerald Kennedy In 1961, but thoughts about cancelling or postponing the ceremony were overruled. The first Roman Catholic to be inaugurated president, John F. Kennedy attended morning mass at Holy Trinity Catholic Church early that morning in Georgetown. Wearing a morning coat, striped trousers, and a top hat, John F. Kennedy swore his oath of office on his mother’s family Bible (<http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/swearing-in/event/john-f-kennedy-1961>). This solemn oath was sworn, as Kennedy describes in the opening of his address, before “Almighty God” (para. 1).

Kennedy began his speech with an observation that the world had changed, and in these changes the Nation must recognize that all human rights have not been earned, but given “from the hand of God” (para. 2). This claim brought forth the notion that God’s providence had brought freedom and blessing to the United States, rather than the idea that any American has earned his/her own rights. This Calvinist³ claim aligns the president with a providential view of God; that is, God allows all things through his will. This particular viewpoint, as expressed in Kennedy’s inaugural, recognizes God’s relationship with the United States as very active; that is, He has the ability to dynamically give and take away blessing from the Nation.

The body of the address incorporates biblical language like, “convert” (Kennedy 1961, para. 9), a term used in the gospels, acts, and the epistles referencing the change from non-believer to follower of Jesus, and “casting off the chains” (Kennedy 1961, para. 9), which is used commonly in scripture as a metaphor for freedom from sin (Acts 26:29, Psalm 2:3, Psalm 107:10-14). The uses of these phrases emphasize the productive and potent transformation that occurs when a person becomes a person of faith alongside the freedom from the chains, or sin, that comes with that choice. These references are emotionally charged since the conversion moment in biblical history is a significant one in a person’s life; for example, upon Paul’s conversion he was blinded simply because he encountered God (Acts 9). Therefore, to a person of faith, or a person of familiarity with Scripture, this reference would serve to call forth a renewed and transformative pathos. This conversion, for Kennedy, concerns transforming good words into deeds in order to assist “our sister republics” (para. 9). He spoke of an alliance of freedom and a revolution of hope because as a free society, it is right to help the many who are poor (para. 9).

³ Calvinism is a reformed branch of Christianity recognizing man as ultimately deprived and having received anything good as a not earned but given by God (McNeill, 1960).

The address employs a variety of rhetorical techniques, for example, repetition and parallel sentence structure; however, it is not until the final four paragraphs of the address that Kennedy incorporates a biblical reference, and it's not until his final line that the name of God is used again. In paragraph 24, the president welcomes faith and devotion such that the United States "can truly light the world" (Kennedy, 1961). The metaphorical use of comparing the United States to the light of the world aligns with Jesus' words in the Gospel of John telling his disciples, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12, New International Version), and the words Jesus spoke to his followers in the Gospel of Matthew telling them, "you are the light of the world...let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16, New International Version). The Reformation Study Bible aligns this reference to the Old Testament prophet Isaiah who compares the glory of God to light (Isaiah 60:1-3, New International Version). Finally, Kennedy concluded his twenty-seven-paragraph address by "asking His blessing and His help" (para. 27) in leadership. This request at the conclusion of the address aligns with Kennedy's previously spoken high view of God's providence insofar as all things are a gift from God. Therefore, as a president, Kennedy communicated a need for God's guidance and blessing through his time in leadership.

Johnson

At 12:02pm on January 20, 1965, the twenty-seventh president of the United States delivered his inaugural speech. Johnson had previously taken his first oath of office on the day President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, November 22, 1963. The oath taken at this particular ceremony before God, Johnson declares in the opening of his speech, "is not mine alone, but ours together" (para. 1). The one nation, and one people, has one destiny and the

future, according to Johnson, rests “on the unchanged character of our people and on their faith” (para. 5). With this assertion, Johnson unifies the nation toward a common goal and with a common foundation of identity, character, and faith.

In his discussion of the American belief in God, Johnson incorporates an interesting view of His favor on the United States. In paragraph twenty-four he spoke, “we have no promise from God that our greatness will endure. We have been allowed by Him to seek greatness with the sweat of our hands and the strength of our spirit.” In the Old Testament book of Job, the protagonist, Job, is a righteous man with wealth and riches (Job 1, New Living Translation). One day in the heavenly courts, Satan makes a wager with God that Job is only faithful because he is blessed, and if he takes away all of the blessings, Job will reject God. God agrees and Satan is allowed to take Job’s livestock, burn his crops, and kill his children and yet, Job remains faithful and speaks, “the Lord gives and the Lord takes away” (Job 1:21, New Living Translation) because God gave him all his wealth and therefore God was righteous in allowing it to be taken away (Job 1, New Living Translation). Johnson’s comment echoes this same sentiment that God has allowed favor, but He may also take it away, therefore, the Nation must continue, as God allows, to work with their hands and their spirits. In referencing this story, Johnson expresses an encouragement to not rely on good fortune or blessing, but to recognize that such blessing may disappear at any time.

The New Testament book of James tells of a conversation between men where one man has faith in God and the other man “faith without works is dead” (James 2:20, New King James Version), continuing the impression that although the United States has faith, it must not rely on it alone, but continue to work hard. Furthermore, Johnson continues, hard work is necessary because the United States has earned great favor and “the judgment of God is harshest on those

who are most favored” (para. 27). Although Johnson encourages hard work, he is confident that if the United States continues to succeed, “it will not be because of what we own, but, rather, because of what we believe; for we are a nation of believers” (paras. 28-29). This claim in the body of Johnson’s address very clearly and simply declares the United States as a nation of believers. This claim is not implied, and the relationship is not indirect. The implications of this particular explicit mention are equally as explicit as the use: Johnson reflected a relationship between God and the United States as simple, definite and undeniable.

Johnson concludes his inaugural speech proclaiming, “I will lead and I will do the best I can,” followed by a direct quote from the Old Testament, 2 Chronicles 1:10. Interestingly, however, in this final quote, Johnson does not quote its scripture reference, but rather he identifies it as “the words of an ancient leader” (para. 43). The prophet, priest, and scribe Ezra wrote the particular book of 2 Chronicles which includes Johnson’s final inaugural words: “Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great” (para. 34). This lack of specific reference to the quote is starkly juxtaposed to Johnson’s previous explicit mention of the United States as a nation of believers. If the United States were in fact a nation of believers, then there would be no reason to omit the biblical reference. Moreover, this complicates the religiosity of the United States as reflected by Johnson by using scripture in a conspicuous way. This rhetorical choice communicates that Johnson recognized that in order to connect with the citizens emotionally and spiritually in effort to unite and motivate, he needed to appeal to both believers and non-believers. In order to do this, Johnson incorporated biblical language that would appeal to and connect with believers, but remain unnoticed to a non-believer.

Nixon

On Monday, January 20, 1969, former Vice President, California Senator and congressman Richard Milhous Nixon delivered his inaugural speech. The Inauguration Ceremony of President Nixon was televised by satellite around the world (<http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/swearing-in>). The swearing in involved two bibles, both open to Isaiah 2:4 which reads, “The Lord will mediate between nations and will settle international disputes. They will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer fight against nation, nor train for war anymore” (New Living Translation).

Aside from swearing into office with a hand on the Bible, Nixon’s inaugural speech could not be further from God. Rather than humbly embracing the God-ordained position as leader of the United States, Richard Nixon basks in the glory of his own greatness. He spoke to initiate the inaugural address, “I ask you to share with me today the majesty of this moment,” (Nixon, 1969, para. 1). Nixon embraces the grandiosity of taking office in telling, “each moment in history is a fleeting time, precious and unique. But some stand out as moments of beginning in which courses are set that shape decades or centuries” (para 2). The moment Nixon perceives to stand out in history, the moment that would shape decades or centuries, is the moment he is sworn into office.

The body of the address boasts of American self-righteousness and the power of the individual to “shape his own destiny” (para. 44). Furthermore, Nixon proclaims, peace comes not through the grace of God, but “years of patient and prolonged diplomacy” (para. 62). These claims stood out in opposition to the understanding of gifts and blessings having come from God; for Nixon, this is not so.

The name of God was mentioned a handful of times throughout the address, the first of which as the president quotes the inaugural address of Franklin D. Roosevelt. This mention is indirect because it is not Nixon himself who mentions God but rather Roosevelt, and Nixon who mentions Roosevelt. This suggests that Nixon considered it relevant to mention God in his address and also considered it significant to reference Roosevelt. Including them together suggests that Nixon recognizes both references of God and references of prominent, popular, and favored historical figures equally persuasive.

Furthermore, rather than quoting scripture as a means of encouragement and inspiration, Nixon quoted the poet Archibald MacLeish. Nixon's conclusory statement ended with a wish to be "sustained by our confidence in the will of God and the promise of man" (para. 76), which interestingly did not insinuate that Nixon was trusting in God, but rather that the nation would move forward sustained by their own knowledge and assurance in the will of God. Each reference suggests that although Nixon does not appear to find his own strength of leadership in God, he nonetheless incorporates the name as many times as his predecessors. This numeric consistency implies that Nixon recognized the value and/or necessity of incorporating God in the inaugural speech, perhaps because his predecessors did so and perhaps because he considered the United States as having a relationship with God and, therefore, God could be used as a rhetorical and persuasive tool.

Carter

Starkly juxtaposed to the inaugural address of Richard Nixon, on January 20, 1977, Democrat and Baptist Jimmy Carter took the oath of office with the Bible gifted to him by his mother and the Bible used in the first inauguration by George Washington (www.inaugural).

sentate.gov/swearingin/bibles). Carter addresses the presence of this historical Bible early in his address as he reads from it “a timeless admonition from the ancient prophet Micah: ‘He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God’ (Micah 6:8)” (para. 4). According to *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Micah chapter 6 concerns a message in preparation for the Messiah to come. Henry (1985) describes the prophet Micah having been directed by God to set the sins of Israel before them for the purpose of conviction in order to make way for the gospel. Specifically in verses 6-8, the prophet calls the people to hear the voice of judgment and recognize their sin because the Lord has shown Micah what God wants to see in his people (Henry, 1985). To open with this specific scripture aligns Carter with the prophet Micah in bearing the responsibility of showing the people their sin. The body of the inaugural speech addresses the United States’ “recent mistakes” (para. 11) and how the Nation must now strive for equality, human rights, sacrifice, peace and quality of life. Just as Micah urges the nation of Israel to recognize their sin and prepare for the new grace of the Messiah, Carter urges the United States to redefine itself with a “fresh faith” (para. 6) and “to define itself in terms of both spirituality and human liberty” (para. 7). This call to newness and re-definition involved a shift of identity in the American dream, just as Micah called the nation of Israel to recognize their sin, repent, and re-define their vision of what God wanted of them.

In pursuit of these goals, Carter hoped that the citizens and himself can “learn together and laugh together and work together and pray together” (para. 9). By situating prayer within this list of activities, Carter normalized prayer as a daily activity. Furthermore, throughout the inaugural speech, Carter embraced and emphasized humility in order to align himself with Micah as merely a prophet or doer of God’s will, not his own selfish ambitions. As the successor to

Richard Nixon, Carter was responsible for bringing American trust back to the President.

Riccards (1993) described Nixon as having been driven to exile because he continually operated “outside the rules of the game” (p. 739). As such, Carter positioned himself as not interested in furthering his own interests, as Nixon was perceived. Near the closing of the address, Carter again recalled the initial reference to Micah and reiterates his desire for “humility, mercy, and justice” (para. 25). Carter spoke against barriers that would divide the nation by means of “race, region, and religion” (para. 26) and plead for unity and pride in the American Government.

Reagan

On Sunday January 20, 1981, for the first time in this location, the President took his oath of office in the Capitol Rotunda on the West Front of the Capitol. Ronald Reagan opened his inaugural address by recognizing those men of honor in his presence as he embraced this “orderly transfer of authority” (para. 1), which the nation recognizes as normal, happening every four years, when actually it “is nothing less than a miracle” (para. 1).

Much of the body of Reagan’s address recognized the economy, tax law, credit debt, and special interest groups, but not God. Near the middle of the address, Reagan incorporated the phrase, “so help me God” (para. 19) as he discussed the hopes and dreams of the administration for the years to come. The president paraphrased Winston Churchill, United States founding fathers, Joseph Warren, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, the dignified Abraham Lincoln, and a young man, Martin Treptow, who left a his job in a small barber shop in 1917 to go to France where he was killed under heavy artillery fire. Reagan asserted that he would work, sacrifice, and endure for the memory of these men and “with God’s help” (para. 38) the nation will perform great deeds.

In the last third of the address, Reagan dedicated an entire paragraph of the speech to prayer and God's place in the United States Inauguration Day. He spoke:

"I am told that tens of thousands of prayer meetings are being held on this day, and for that I am deeply grateful. We are a nation under God, and I believe God intended for us to be free. It would be fitting and good, I think, if on each Inauguration Day in future years it should be declared a day of prayer" (para. 30).

This paragraph slightly fell out of the flow of the speech, as it was situated between a paragraph on terrorism and the tributes to the Nation's founding fathers. However, it clearly described Reagan's view on God and concentrated it in one small location within the address. This clear and unambiguous display of spiritual practice implies that Reagan found it necessary to express his own respect and reverence for the act of prayer within his inaugural address, which suggests that he found the United States in need of the knowledge of their new president's spiritual life. Reagan expressed gratitude for the prayers of those tens of thousands of citizens who spent their time praying together for him and continued to position this gratitude within the conceptualization of America as a nation under God. Following this statement, Reagan inserted a self-disclosure statement describing his personal belief of God's intentions for United States' freedom. In light of the acknowledgement of God's place in American liberty, Reagan again self-disclosed a personal thought that this practice of Inauguration Day prayer should continue for the years to come. This further suggests Reagan's expression of the importance of the spiritual act of prayer insofar as he finds it worthwhile to mention within his speech as a recommended component of the inauguration day for future years. This recommendation implies that Reagan recognizes prayer as important for the nation at the time of his address, but that it is also important to maintain this same reverential act. As a reflection of the nation's religiosity, these

suggestions indicate that the United States valued prayer highly at the time of Reagan's inauguration, and also valued the knowledge that their president himself valued the act of prayer.

In closing, Reagan simply spoke, "God bless you, and thank you" (para. 39). This humble farewell concluded his inaugural speech with gratitude of having been elected to the presidency and a wishing of blessing upon the Nation. This remark is significant because it recognizes God in the very last words of the address, which signifies his use of God's blessing on the United States as a rhetorical tool because of its placement in the text.

Bush

The 200th anniversary of the presidency was observed on January 20, 1989, as George Bush took the oath of office on the same Bible used by George Washington in 1789. American evangelical reverend Billy Graham delivered both the invocation and the benediction at the Inaugural ceremony of George Bush and the musical selection included "God Bless America" sung by Alvy Powel of the U.S. Army Band (<http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/swearing-in/event/george-bush-1989>).

George Bush opened his inaugural speech by paying tribute to his predecessor, Ronald Reagan, thanking him for the wonderful things he had done for America. After acknowledging the memory of George Washington, as his "first act as President" (para. 4), George Bush asked the Nation to bow their heads in prayer as he spoke,

"Heavenly Father, we bow our heads and thank you for your love. Accept our thanks for the peace that yields this day and the shared faith that makes its continuance likely. Make us strong to do your work, willing to heed and hear your will, and write on our hearts these words: 'use power to help people.' For we are given power not to advance our own

purposes, not to make a great show in the world, not a name. There is but one just use of power, and it is to serve people. Help us remember it, Lord, Amen” (para. 5).

This prayer situated within the body of the inaugural speech, communicated a message that the president valued prayer enough to lead a national moment of prayer upon his first official moments as leader of the United States. Furthermore, the nature of the words within the speech first conveyed Bush’s gratitude for God’s love, followed by acknowledging that the shared faith of the United States is what makes the continuance of the nation likely. Bush asked for strength and for the ability to regard the will of God in leadership and to use his power for the good of others. Following this request, Bush spoke two sentences not of thanks or request, but of declaration that power is not for the advancement of one’s own agenda, but for the purpose of service. This declaration suggests that Bush’s goal as president was not to further a personal objective, but rather to carry out God’s plan for the United States. In terms of the inaugural address’s reflective element, this statement further suggests that citizens desire a humble president who does not seek to serve his own agenda, but looks out for the greater good.

The paragraphs following the prayer addressed democracy, freedom, justice, legacy, deficit, children and the future of the country concluding with a proclamation of God’s love and wishing His blessing on the United States. Other religious metaphors were intertwined with the words of President Bush, for example, the use of the English translation of the Latin phrase: *in necessariis unitas*, which translates to, “In crucial things, unity” (para. 19). This quote was first used by Marco Antonio de Dominis and its theological usage often attributes to unity in those beliefs fundamentally necessary to salvation, and freedom in beliefs those non-essential to salvation (Hanegraaff, 2009). However, in the context of Bush’s inaugural, it would appear to

serve in reference to partisanship and the need to set aside non-essential disagreements for the greater good.

Near the concluding paragraphs of the speech, Bush claimed to “yearn for a greater tolerance” (para. 24) with respect to one another’s attitudes and ways of life because “a President is neither prince nor pope” (para. 24). This claim alludes to the President’s conceptualization of the office, insofar as regardless of his opinions, he is neither royalty nor religious leadership and the best way to promote peace is tolerance. This statement highlights the unique nature of the presidency; it is not a birthright, as would be a prince, which carries a significant political responsibility to please those the president leads because his role is temporary and relies on the support of those he leads. Furthermore, his statement nuances the religious nature of the presidency insofar as he values God and His blessing, but he is not a religious leader with both political and religious responsibilities, like the pope; his responsibilities are more complex. These responsibilities were expressed through this section of Bush’s inaugural speech as concerned with greater tolerance. In order to promote this tolerance, Bush appealed to the political and religious elements of his office by claiming to be neither prince nor pope, which alludes to the fact that he instead carries elements of both.

In the final words of the inaugural speech, President Bush recognizes the challenges of the years to come, but he claims no fear of the future because “God’s love is truly boundless” (para. 26). This simple sentence served to further communicate Bush’s reliance on God for strength, guidance, and peace. Finally, the president concluded his address by thanking the nation and wishing God’s blessing upon them as he spoke, “God bless you and God bless the United States of America” (para. 28). In this final sentiment, Bush signifies the value of God’s blessing because he chose to end his inaugural speech in the way he did. Therefore, its reflective

element communicates that the United States continued to value God's blessing at the time of Bush's inauguration.

Clinton

Having defeated the incumbent George Bush, at the age of forty-six, William (Bill) Clinton was sworn into office on the King James Bible given to him by his grandmother open to Galatians 6:9, a scripture he would proceed to reference within the inaugural speech (<http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/bibles>).

Early in the inaugural address, Clinton references "the Almighty" (para. 4) and the way in which the founders surrendered their purposes to God. The body of the address concentrates on national crime, freedom, jobs, entitlement and the Nation's triumphs over challenges such as the Civil War, the Great Depression, and communism.

Reference to God or the bible does not appear again in Clinton's speech until the penultimate paragraph of the address. The President addresses Galatians 6:9, the scripture the bible was open to upon his swearing into office. Clinton spoke, "And so, my fellow Americans, at the edge of the 21st Century, let us begin with energy and hope, with faith and discipline, and let us work until our work is done. The Scripture says, "And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not" (para. 41). This verse lies among verses of advice from the apostle Paul to the Christians in the city of Galatia. The contextual chapter consists of practical advice from Paul for Christians in their dealings with one another, followed by encouragement for the Galatians against those who were doubting their gospel. McNight (1995) describes Paul as encouraging his friends here to do good and not become tired because ultimately their reward for good work will be from God. McNight (1995) continues to illustrate

good works as a means for sowing good so that the Spirit would be pleased and we would later reap the harvest of the good works. In Clinton's address, the rhetoric alludes to the hard work the United States has already been doing in order to overcome challenges, and he urges the people to continue this work. The scripture supports Clinton's request in paragraph thirty-eight, "My fellow Americans, you, too, must play your part in our renewal. I challenge a new generation of young Americans to a season of service." This request for continued work followed by his chosen scripture, positions tiresome work as a deed that will sow future reward; regardless of the temptation to grow tired, the President urges the nation to not grow weary because the reward is soon coming.

President Clinton concludes his address, as many of his predecessors have, by appealing to the work he hopes to do, with God's help. His final paragraph includes biblical metaphorical terms such as, "from this joyful mountaintop," "we have heard the trumpets" and "we must answer the call." These metaphorical calls appear often in scripture, the prophet Isaiah urges God's people to "shout from the top of the mountains" (Isaiah 42:11, King James Version), and in the New Testament, Jesus leads his favored disciples up to the mountaintop to experience a miraculous image of God (Mark 9:2-29). The sounds of trumpets carry significant meaning in biblical texts as well. In the Old Testament book of Joshua, the sound of trumpets signals the yelling that cause the walls of Jericho to fall down (Joshua 6). In the book of Leviticus, the Lord speaks to Moses telling him that each week there must be a Sabbath day signaled by the sound of trumpets (Leviticus 23:24). In the book of Numbers the sound of trumpets signal a feast (Numbers 10:10). In the book of Joel, the trumpet sounds a time of solemn reverence because the judgment of God is coming (Joel 2). Finally, the concept of answering the call of God is echoed in both the Old Testament book of Job, as Job tells of his desire to answer a call from God (Job

13). In Psalm 91, the author writes, “he will call on me, I will answer” (verse 15, New International Version), and in the New Testament book of 1 Peter as the Apostle Peter encourages suffering Christians to endure persecution, and to always be prepared to answer the calling of anyone. Therefore, Clinton is using this scripture reference to call the citizens into action “at the edge of the 21st century” (para. 41). By including the reference to a trumpet call, Clinton urges the nation to move into this new age with energy, hope, and discipline as if these are callings from God. This acknowledgement of these great responsibilities as callings from God further suggests Clinton’s communication that a call from God should be recognized and moved into action to do whatever the President may ask of them in the coming days. This claim aligned any call to action from the executive branch as also a call from God. Moreover, it suggests that the United States’ relationship with God was at a point of respect and admonition for God’s requirements.

Finally, following the urge for disciplined hard work, perseverance, and the metaphorical symbols of God’s calling on the nation, Bill Clinton brought his address to a close with a simple, “thank you and God bless you all”(para. 43). This closing, following Clinton’s call to action, proposes that hope and hard work would bring about God’s further blessing.

W. Bush

On the cold and rainy day of January 20, 2001, the common mantra: like father, like son, presented itself in the overall dynamic of George W. Bush’s Inaugural ceremony. Evangelical preacher, Billy Graham delivered the invocation, and the bible used was the Bush family bible, also used by his father twelve years prior (<http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/swearing-in/event/george-w-bush-2001>). Following a tribute to his predecessor, Bill Clinton, just as his

father paid immediate tribute to Ronald Reagan, Bush expressed honor and humility in standing “where so many of America’s leaders have come before” (para. 4).

In paragraph thirteen, President Bush proclaimed that unity and justice is within reach “because we are guided by a power larger than ourselves who creates us equal in his image.” This statement carries considerable weight in its incorporation of the Genesis chapter 1 scripture concerning man having been created in “His own image” (Verse 27, New International Version) with claims of equality of race, gender, and class. The preceding paragraphs outline the separation of prosperity and poverty in America due merely to circumstances of birth. “We do not accept this,” (para. 12) the President proclaims, wherein he supports this decree through the most basic of Biblical stories- the creation account in Genesis 1.

The identity of the United States is echoed throughout the body of George W. Bush’s address. “We must live up to the calling we share,” he spoke in paragraph twenty. “We will speak for the values that gave our nation birth,” Bush recalls in paragraph 27 in reference to purpose, faith, resolve, and strength. “Our children are at risk,” Bush asserted in paragraph twenty-nine, and this is unacceptable because “abandonment and abuse are not acts of God, they are failures of love” (para. 29). The desire for acts of love also was given mention in the latter half of the address when President Bush gave brief mention to a New Testament parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-27) and spoke of the way life often calls us to do great things, and quoted Mother Theresa, “a saint of our times” (para. 39) having said, “we are called to do small things with great love” (para. 39). Each of these references suggest an intertwined identity of America and God through alluding to God’s role in the foundation of American values and the juxtaposition of God and love.

In the concluding remarks of the address, President Bush attributes the changes of the nation to “our nation’s grand story of courage and its simple dream of dignity” (para. 45). This story, however, is not in our own hands because “we are not this story’s author” (para. 46). But God, the one “who fills time and eternity with his purpose” (para. 46) has authored our lives. This remark suggests that God is the one who providentially composed the history of the United States, and furthermore, that the design of the nation’s future remains in the hands of God who will do with it whatever fits His purpose. Politically, this statement empowers President Bush as a man who submits to God who has ultimate influence over the future of the United States.

Finally, just as his father concluded his 1989 inaugural address with “God bless you and God bless the United States of America” (George H. W. Bush, 1989, para. 28), George W. Bush in 2001 concluded his inaugural speech with, “God bless you all and God bless America” (para. 49). This conclusion echoes the previous remarks concerning God as America’s author, which recognize the power of God to direct the future and in this recognition, George W. Bush requested blessing for each individual as well as for the nation as a whole. This farewell appeal for God’s blessing suggests that the President continues to rhetorically acknowledge the Nation’s need for God’s blessing.

Obama

On a typical overcast day in the year 2009, the nation’s first African-American president delivered his inaugural address at the largest attended event in the history of Washington D.C. President Barack Obama took his oath of office on the Bible used to inaugurate Abraham Lincoln (<http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/bibles>). This ceremony included many firsts: President Obama was the first citizen of Hawaii to hold the presidential office, Senator Diane Feinstein

emceed the ceremony as the first woman to do so, and it was the first inaugural address to include web captioning. At the West Front of the Capitol, the address was delivered facing the Lincoln memorial in honor of the nearing 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth (<http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/swearing-in/event/barack-obama-2009>).

The address lasted for twenty-one minutes wherein the President spoke of a journey to remain a prosperous nation, a drive to create jobs with a decent wage, and international relationships. The name of God appears exactly four times, three of which are concentrated in the final paragraphs of the address. These mentions are in reference to God's call on the United States "to shape an uncertain destiny" (para. 30), "God's grace upon us" (para. 34) as we achieved and maintained freedom, and in his final remark, "God bless you, and God bless the United States of America" (para. 35).

The President made one reference to "Scripture" early in his speech: "in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things" (para. 9). This concept appears in the New Testament book of 1 Corinthians chapter 13, when the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth about his maturity. Paul wrote, "when I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned like a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13: 11, New Living Translation). Just prior to the reference of this particular verse, the president asserted, "we remain a young nation" (para. 9); therefore, the incorporation of this verse lends itself to Obama's call for America to recognize the time to grow into maturity. In this paragraph, Obama's first mention of the name of God arose, "The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit, to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift" (para. 9) the President spoke, "the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a change to pursue their full measure of happiness" (para. 9). This particular claim could be further linked

specifically to equality of all men and women of all races and ethnicities. Winter (2011) positioned Obama alongside any American who is supremely interested in issues of race and racism. Through this claim, Obama positioned gender and racial equality as a God-given promise, and therefore, no man can deny it.

Aside from the historical “firsts” mentioned above, Barack Obama’s inaugural rhetoric also incorporates a number of firsts. In paragraph twenty-three, the President references the United States’ national identity as having “patchwork heritage,” describing the nation as one of “Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus- and non-believers.” These specific references to religions other than Christianity, or lack of religion altogether, having history in the United States is a first for inaugural speeches. This particular phrase first signifies a modification of the American identity as having been built upon the foundation of God and His providential blessing. These remarks suggest instead that the identity of America lies in its diversity of cultures, languages, and beliefs.

Furthermore, in paragraph twenty-four, President Obama spoke directly to “the Muslim world,” expressing the United States’ desire to “seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect.” For those who desire conflict, dissention, or “to blame their ills on the West” (para. 23), President Obama declared to them: “you are on the wrong side of history” (para. 23), symbolically signaling that the United States is turning/has turned a new page in history, one of unity of religions, or lack thereof, freedom of belief, and respect of differences. Anyone who does not agree, “we will extend a hand if you are unwilling to unclench your fist” (para. 24). This appeal suggests that the United States has turned a page of history wherein tolerance, respect, and unity of religious or non-religious beliefs and lifestyles is prominent. This is not an appeal for God’s blessing, but rather a remark that signifies a shift in the position of the

United States at large with respect to God. We no longer must necessarily be one nation under God under this new side of history because tolerance, respect and unity apply to all systems of belief and non-belief.

Concluding Remark

The next chapter of this thesis will incorporate the individual analyses from this chapter to develop trends in the uses of the name of God, trends in the uses of Scripture, and a claim concerning Obama's ideology of a new side of history.

CHAPTER 5

TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

Trends in the Uses of God

In 76 years of first inaugural addresses, the name of God arises in a variety of terms. Numerically, the name God appears relatively consistently from Roosevelt (1933) who uses the name twice to Reagan (1981) who uses it most often, five times. The exception is Jimmy Carter, who does not mention the name “God” in his address. While he does not use the name “God” however, Carter (1977) incorporates references to God through the use of the word “Lord” instead. This use of an alternate term suggests that Carter did not disregard God, but rather chose to incorporate varying terms for His name. The use of the term Lord suggests a more personal relationship with God because in the context of the Old Testament, the use of the term Lord is a translation of the Hebrew name “Adonai,” meaning master (Strong, 2009), whereas the term God is a translation of the Hebrew name “El” which derives from the concepts of might, strength, and power (Strong, 2009). However, in the scope of this thesis, the varying terms do not suggest a difference in the relationship between God and the United States through the inaugural speech, but rather it suggests a different relationship between Carter and God, compared to his preceding and succeeding presidents. Furthermore, Presidents Truman (1977), Eisenhower (1953), Kennedy (1961), and Clinton (1993) utilize the term “the Almighty” in addition to God’s name; George Bush incorporates the term “Lord” and “Father” in reference to God, and George W. Bush’s (2001) inaugural speech features the same term used by George Washington (1789) in his own inaugural address to reference God: “Great Author.” While the twelve presidents I chose to

analyze in this thesis generally incorporated God's name three times throughout the address, the inclusion of alternate terms appear sporadically.

The trends in the use of the different names of God vary between presidents and time periods. This thesis unpacks four trends in the use of God in presidential inaugural addresses: first, the replicative progression in the use of the concluding signature, God bless America, second, claims concerning the nature of God, third, the recognition of the inaugural ceremony as sacred before God, and finally, the wishing for God's blessing upon the nation and the particular president's leadership.

Concerning the first claim of this thesis, the replicative progression in the use of the concluding signature, God bless America, this thesis posits that United States presidents recognize and acknowledge previous inaugural speech uses of God and replicate and incorporate them into their own address. Before Ronald Reagan (1981), the inaugural speeches ended with an encouraging final thought concerning prosperity or the American dream. In 1981, Reagan ended his first inaugural speech with "God bless you, and thank you" (para. 39) and the inaugural speech clincher was forever changed. George Bush concluded his inaugural speech in 1989 with a variation of Reagan's sign-off and a significant addition, "thank you, God bless you and God bless the United States of America" (para. 28). Bill Clinton's 1993 inaugural speech returned toward Reagan's closing with "thank you and God bless you all" (para. 43). Like father like son, George W. Bush included the blessing upon the nation in addition to the simple God bless you as he closed his 2001 speech with "God bless you all, and God bless America" (para. 49). Finally, in 2009 Barack Obama closed with the same sentiment, "Thank you, God bless you and God bless the United States of America" (para. 35). The God bless America trend as I name it in this thesis, began with Ronald Reagan in 1981 and is still in effect today. Having existed for

nearly thirty years within the context of the inaugural speech conclusion with only slight variation, I argue that this trend is pertinent, persistent, and perennial. This thesis claims this trend's pervasiveness because the inaugural addresses prior to Reagan's introduction of the sentiment concluded with varying statements of inspiration, like Jimmy Carter's expressed goal of continuing the "ever expanding American Dream" (para. 31) or Truman's desire for "a world of justice, harmony, and peace" (para. 71). Furthermore, each address analyzed following Reagan's introduction of the God Bless America sentiment incorporated some variation of the same notion. The varying closing thoughts prior to Reagan and these similar closing thoughts beginning with and following Reagan suggest that the trend began with Reagan's inaugural address each succeeding president imitated this closing thought. This trend suggests that because presidents continued to incorporate the sentiment into their own speeches through various rewording, they recognized the power of such a concluding statement and intentionally chose to incorporate it into their own address. This finding supports Domke and Coe's (2011) suggestion that politicians manipulate faith in order to connect with religiously inclined voters.

Another contextualization for the name of God recurring in the inaugural genre is claims concerning the nature of God's character. Lyndon Johnson in 1965 began this trend through his claim regarding the prosperity of the United States. Johnson (1965) spoke, "but we have no promise from God that our greatness will endure. We have been allowed by Him to seek greatness with the sweat of our hands and the strength of our spirit" (para. 24). Through these statements Johnson (1965) made claims about God's providence over the United States insofar as he has allowed greatness and he can also, just as easily, allow failure. This God whom has blessed the United States is to be feared because he makes no promise of future blessing. This prophetic warning signifies what Dallek (1998) describes as what over sixty percent of

Americans saw as the country's most urgent problem, the Vietnam War. Johnson's theology concerning God allowing failure foretells his own demise on the rocks of Vietnam. Furthermore, in the second sentence, Johnson (1965) further portrays the greatness of God through the claim that Americans have been allowed by God to seek greatness because of hard work and a strong spirit. Therefore, there is an element of responsibility that falls upon the United States. This responsibility signifies the belief that God's grace is abounding; however, it is not infinite. Johnson uses the rhetoric of instability to prompt Americans to maintain a good work ethic in the event that God's blessing runs out. This installation of fear serves the political and economic purpose of encouraging hard work in the Nation. Johnson communicates that as long as the individuals maintain a strong spirit, then they will continue to receive God's blessing and in the case that the blessing runs out, their hard work will have built a strong enough society to endure. Economically, this statement places the burden of working hard and maintaining an effective society on the people, rather than on the government; a hardworking society then produces constructive effects which in turn, reflect positively on the leadership of Johnson as the president in office.

The successor to Lyndon Johnson (1965), Richard Nixon (1969), participated in and contributed to this trend by attending to notions of God's character in the inaugural speech. In the final words of Nixon's 1969 inaugural address, he encouraged the Nation to seize the opportunity of the future, "firm in our faith, steadfast in our purpose, cautious of dangers, but sustained by our confidence in the will of God" (para. 76). This simple concluding sentiment described the will of God as providential insofar as it can be trusted in, relied upon, and utilized for strength. This character claim suggests that God's will is to be trusted as a source of relief from the anxieties of the future so that instead, the United States can do as Nixon suggested and

“seize the opportunity of the future” (para. 76). This use of a claim about God’s character in this context serves the purpose of supporting Nixon’s encouragement of facing the future that may contain dangers, with a steadfast confidence and faith in God. Nixon’s encouragement is for the citizens to seize the opportunities of the future, without the fear of failure. This encouragement’s political agenda lies in its desire to inspire hope and vitality in the citizens, who in turn, would support their leader without fear, but with a confidence and a faith in God. Therefore, Nixon’s references to God foster and cultivate support for his future decisions made in office that may appear precarious.

Ronald Reagan also incorporated elements of God’s nature when he described God as having “intended for us to be free” (para. 30) in his 1981 inaugural address. This statement expressed the sentiment that the United States, as “a nation under God” (para. 30) is intended for freedom within God’s own will. This use of the name of God positions Him as desiring for United States prosperity, freedom, and well-being and therefore, can be trusted as a guide because He has the Nation’s best interest at heart.

Furthermore, George Bush’s (1989) inaugural speech incorporated elements of God’s character as he juxtaposes human flaw with God’s love. By emphasizing human weakness, Bush’s use of God opposes that of his predecessors insofar as he highlights humility and reliance on God’s grace, rather than works. This claim humbles the United States citizens beneath God’s strong and loving will because it implies their nature is weak and imperfect in comparison. This claim was positioned within a discussion of the fear of the future and similar to Reagan’s (1981) notion that God’s will for the United States is good, Bush (1989) described God’s boundless love as a remedy for the fear of the challenges to come. The use of God in this way suggests that, like Reagan, Bush used God’s nature as a support for his inaugural speech claims. For Bush, it was

manifested in a discouragement of fear of the future, but instead a trust in God's good and providential will. Similar to Nixon (1969), Bush's reference to God serves a particular political end. That end is to encourage the United States to trust in his leadership because God supports it and where man is weak, God is strong. Therefore, the believer who trusts in God's will as good will further trust in Bush's decisions as good.

George W. Bush's first inaugural speech in 2001 addressed the nature of God by describing current events as having not been acts of God. In paragraphs twenty-eight and twenty-nine, Bush addressed the problem of American poverty, abandonment, and abuse. These persistent problems "are not acts of God" (para. 29) according to Bush, and therefore, he has painted God as a good and loving God. This description of God's character within this inaugural speech positions God as loving and desiring good for the United States and serves as an appeal to the believer's concept of God as good and desiring blessing for the Nation. Furthermore, politically speaking, this appeal positions God as opposing the problems of poverty, abandonment, and abuse the Nation was currently facing. By positioning himself as supported by God, and positioning God as inherently opposed to these challenges, the president also positions himself as entirely opposed to these American problems and in effort to instead do good.

Finally, the trend of incorporating claims concerning the nature of God into the inaugural speech consistently carried into Barack Obama's first inaugural address in 2009. Similar to Reagan's notion of God's providential will concerning the United States, Obama also encouraged the citizens to have hope for the future and trust in God's grace. Also aligning with Reagan (1981), Obama positioned the freedom of the United States as having been received as a gift of God. This claim allows for God to be perceived as having favor and blessing for the United States, and also as a giver of good gifts.

This trend of God's favor signifies the aspects of God that the United States at large continues to maintain. This concept is thread through the inaugural speeches of Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, Reagan, W. Bush, and Obama. Since the inaugural address as a genre stands as a reflection of the nation itself, as discussed in Chapter 3, then the aspects of God that Americans choose to hold within their national identity are those which continue to appear in the inaugural speeches. What this tells of religiosity is that first American's recognized God's power and yet continued to work hard with God's strength, and the belief system evolved into a reverence for God's providence and perpetuation of His good will, and finally the aspect of God that perseveres most in the United States is the acknowledgement and appreciation of the favor and good fortune of God as he gives freedom, love, and good-will. This pervasive aspect suggests that the United States enjoys the good gifts of God such as freedom and therefore chooses to perpetuate the concept a government and a president whose political power operates within the favor of a God who continually grants these good gifts.

The third trend in inaugural speeches concerning God's name is the recognition of His presence at the inaugural ceremony and oath of office. This trend first appears in Eisenhower's (1953) inaugural speech. Following his prayer, Eisenhower (1953) describes the majesty of Inauguration Day: "we are summoned by this honored and historic ceremony to witness more than the act of one citizen swearing his oath of service, in the presence of God" (para. 7). This acknowledgement of God's presence in this day while also describing its history and majesty aligns God's presence with American history. This conceptual use of God continues in the inaugural speech of Eisenhower's successor, John F. Kennedy (1961). Kennedy (1961) opens with this notion that "the same solemn oath our forbearers prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago" (para. 1) was sworn before "the Almighty God" (para. 1). This statement parallels

that of Eisenhower (1953) by aligning the historic nature of the inaugural ceremony with God's company. Johnson (1965) takes up this notion as well when he spoke "the oath I have taken before you and before God is not mine alone, but ours together" (para. 1). The last address incorporating this trend is Richard Nixon in 1969. When Nixon (1969) gives mention to God's presence however, it is not at the forefront of the address, but rather the latter half. As he begins to conclude his address, Nixon proclaims to have taken an oath "today in the presence of God" (para. 67). The succeeding presidents do not fail to acknowledge the sacred nature of the oath itself for example, Reagan (1981) calls it a "solemn and momentous occasion" (para. 1) and yet, the acknowledgement of God's presence in the occasion is lost. This eventual nuance of God as a presence in the taking of the oath, in conjunction with the previously discussed trends in the use of God, suggest that the use of God in the inaugural address had shifted from support in the power of a particular president himself to supporting the goals and purposes of the elected president during his term in office.

The last major trend in the uses of God is the plea for God's blessing on the United States. The occurrence of this particular use of God's name is present in Roosevelt's (1933) first inaugural speech all the way through Barack Obama's (2009) first inaugural speech. Roosevelt (1933) ended his speech by "humbly asking the blessing of God" (para. 26). This simple request manifested in other phraseology amidst the openings and closings of the succeeding presidents, but the sentiment remained the same; whether it was a request for blessing, grace, or help, each president communicated a desire for God to intervene in the events of United States. Kennedy (1961) asked for "His blessing and His help" (para. 27) both Reagan (1981) and Clinton (1993) claimed a need for "God's help" (para. 38, para. 42 respectively) in the upcoming years and Obama (2009) proclaimed "God's grace upon us" (34) as he encouraged the nation in his closing

remarks. Each of these comments concerning God's grace, help, and blessing indicate the desire the United States has for the blessings of God, and yet I find no mention of the reprimand, correction, or law of God in the inaugural address. What then, does this imply regarding American religiosity? Perhaps that as a nation, the United States is concerned with the God who grants freedom, prosperity, hope, and blessing, and not the God that requires law abiding, repentance, or commitment.

This finding is particularly relevant to the conceptualization of God as a rhetorical tool for political purposes. This trend implies, as Domke and Coe (2011) suggest, such an intentionally manipulative use of God because of its disregard of particular aspects of God's character. What the speeches do not incorporate concerning God is just as relevant to understanding the relationship between God and the United States as what they do incorporate. Since the inaugural genre does not tell biblical tales where God strikes disobedient people dead on the spot (Acts 5:1-11), allows plagues to torture a righteous man (Job 1-40), or floods the entire earth killing all but one small group of people and animals (Genesis 5-10), it can be understood that the use of God in inaugural addresses is rhetorical and intentionally politically motivated because they do not recognize God's full nature, and they do emphasize those aspects of God that agree with their individual goal and agenda.

To return briefly to Toolin's (1983) work concerning inaugural addresses from 1789 to 1981, Toolin (1983) asserts that there is a religion present in the inaugural addresses and it "at least partially emanate[s] from the Judeo-Christian tradition" (p. 42). I claim here, as represented by this fourth trend, that this religion present in the United States as can be seen in the inaugural addresses does stem from the Judeo-Christian tradition; however, it is carefully and selectively created. Just as it was present in Toolin's (1983) research, this civil religion stems beyond 1981

and into the twenty-first century. These deistic references and spiritual calls for blessing and grace support the notion that the United States is a believing nation, only so far as to accept good gifts. Whereas the references to this blessing in the inaugurals of Roosevelt (1933) and Truman (1949) recognized the fleeting and potentially temporary nature of God's blessing and encouraged the nation to continue working hard, which suggests that God is in support of the success in American capitalism, this perception simply fell away and developed into a simple declarative request for God's blessing on the United States. This suggests that the presidents acknowledged a need to maintain references to God in their inaugural speeches for the purposed of pleasing believers as well as those who may not be believers, yet maintain a desire to know that their president is humble to a greater power. However, since the references digress, a brief mention near the conclusion would appear to suffice in the latter years of the inaugural addresses analyzed in this thesis.

In addition to the four aggregate trends, there are also individual cases of the use of God present in the inaugural addresses from 1933-2009 that do not necessarily constitute trends. First, both presidents Truman (1949) and George W. Bush (2001) referenced God within a proclamation of and urge toward equality insofar as man is created in the image of God, and therefore are created equal. Second, although nearly all of the twelve presidents represented in this thesis reference prayer, presidents Eisenhower (1953) and Bush (1989) incorporate a prayer into the inaugural speech, and Reagan (1981) references specifically inauguration day as a time of prayer. In the opening of Eisenhower's (1953) address, he asks the audience to bow their heads for a prayer. He requests the ability to discern right from wrong as well as a plea for equal concern for all people regardless of "station, race, or calling" (para. 3). George Bush's (1989) prayer began with an expression of gratitude for God's love followed by a prayer for God's will

and the strength to use the power of the presidency to help people. Reagan's (1981) reference to prayer in the body of his speech regarded the "tens of thousands of prayer meetings" (para. 30) that were being held in his honor on inauguration day. In recognition of this act, Reagan (1981) asserted that since the United States is a nation under God, then it would be fitting to continue this activity for all future inaugurations. These references to prayer expand upon the notion that the United States, as a nation has a relationship with prayer, which is inherently, in the context of these inaugural speeches, tied to God. The implications of these continued references appearing in each of the researched inaugural speeches from Roosevelt (1933) to Obama (2009) is that fundamentally, the United States has a relationship with prayer. As noted in Chapter 2, Campbell and Jamieson (1985) classify presidential inaugural genre as concerned with, "past and future in present contemplation, affirm of praise shared principles that will guide the incoming administration, ask the audience to gaze upon traditional values, employ an elegant, literary language and rely on heightening of effect" (p. 395). Through this lens of inaugural address functions and purposes, the presence of prayer in the inaugural address served to fulfill many of these concerns. The use of prayer in the speech serves to promote past and present contemplation as well as affirm and praise shared principles of unity. These prayers also incorporate eloquent language; particularly in Eisenhower's prayer, the language is similar to that used in a classical biblical translation such as King James Version with terms such as "thou" and "beseech." The idea of eloquent language is essential to Cicero's understanding of rhetoric. Eloquent language is powerful and persuasive because of its artistic composition; Cicero describes it as so potent a force that in terms of politics, "it determines their customs and laws and rights, and controls the government of the state, and expresses everything that concerns whatever topic is in a graceful and flowing style"(338). In terms of politics today, the use of eloquent language in Eisenhower's

prayer serves the same purpose: to determine and empower the speaker to influence the audience.

Furthermore, there are additional references to a deity which allude to God yet do not incorporate His name explicitly. First, Eisenhower (1953) describes the “gifts of the Creator that are man’s inalienable rights, and that make all men equal in his sight” (para. 16). This is undeniably a reference to God although it lacks the word ‘God.’ Eisenhower (1953) also references “the watchfulness of a Divine Providence” (para. 19) which perpetuated the notion that there is a Deity that oversees the nation. Jimmy Carter’s (1977) address does not mention the name of God, but instead uses Lord, which, as previously discussed, signifies a deeper personal relationship. Carter’s address is highly spiritual in other areas as well, first, he reads directly from a Bible gifted to him by his mother, expresses a desire for “fresh faith” (para. 6) and praises the United States as “the first society to openly define itself in terms of both spirituality and human liberty” (para. 7); although these statements don’t explicitly use the name of God, they communicate a foundational and identity-tied relationship between God and the United States. Finally, George W. Bush (2001) proclaims the guidance of “a power larger than ourselves who create us equal in His image” (para. 13) as well as references the words of Mother Teresa, the Roman Catholic nun and missionary (para. 39) which implies a reverence for God as the Creator, as well as respect for His loyal and humble followers. The uses of different terms for God do not necessarily indicate a different meaning, but rather serve to illuminate particular elements of His character. For example, the use of Creator in reference to God highlights a belief and suggestion of God’s role in creation of mankind. Furthermore, the use of the term Divine Providence or higher power suggests an appeal to the nature of God as overseer and guide of the United States.

These terms are references to God in specific and particular ways, but references to God nonetheless.

In addition to the incorporation of God in the inaugural speech as a rhetorical tool, it is also necessary to discuss the inclusion of Biblical scriptures for similar purposes. The next section of this chapter will address the use of Scripture in the inaugural addresses from 1933-2009.

Trends in the Uses of Scripture

For this thesis, beginning with Roosevelt's (1933) first inaugural address, the Bible coexists with the inaugural speech genre. In Roosevelt's (1933) discussion of those who have lost the vision of the United States, the president quotes Proverbs 29:18, "where there is no vision the people perish" (para. 5). Although the President does not say that his words derive from the Proverbs, the sentence is a direct quote from the King James Version of the scripture. Truman (1949) also indirectly references the Bible when he discusses the faith of the founding fathers as he spoke, "from this faith we will not be moved" (para. 8) a reference to Psalm 62:6. Truman (1949) also incorporates scripture in the closing of his speech when he describes anyone who "hungers and thirsts after righteousness" (para. 66) as an ally. This phraseology originates in the Gospel of Matthew 5:6 when Jesus spoke the Sermon on the Mount. Again, the president did not specifically cite the Bible, but used the words nonetheless. Eisenhower (1953) discussed a spiritual strength as more important than material strength, reminiscent of Philippians 4:13 which reads, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (New King James Version). There are Biblical references in neither Kennedy (1961) nor Johnson's (1965) inaugural speeches, and Nixon (1969) references a famous poet rather than Scripture. These variances in scriptural

reference indicate that not all presidents found it necessary or relevant to include references to the bible, even though they referenced God. Whereas God is the manifestation of a higher power or creator being, the Bible may only be holy only to a Judeo-Christian who claims it as holy. A president can easily acknowledge God and have no need for the Bible; in terms of the inaugural genre, they are separate entities, which suggest that although the United States at large has a relationship with God, it does not necessarily have a relationship with the practice of Judeo-Christian faith.

The uses of individual Scripture passages took a large turn, however, in Jimmy Carter's (1977) inaugural address. In the opening of Carter's (1977) address, he acknowledges his Bible and opens to "a timeless admonition from the ancient prophet Micah" (para. 3). This break in the trend of using individual scripture references to directly quoting a full passage is significant because it is the first time the president in question directly acknowledged that the quote he mentioned was from the Bible, and furthermore, incorporated the direct Scripture reference from which the text came. Carter (1977) references Micah 6:8 both in the opening and closing of his speech, further emphasizing its importance. This direct scripture quote speaks to Carter's identity as a Baptist and also serves to illuminate a particular element of American religiosity because an evangelical was elected to the presidency. Although Carter himself was a particularly religious man, his incorporation of the scripture in his inaugural speech not only suggests elements of his own character, but also serves to reflect a particular interest of the United States. A man of this faith in the White House emphasizes and reflects the relationship between God and the United States because it suggests that, along with other reasons, there was still a desire to elect a man with such a faith in God.

Like Kennedy (1961) and Johnson (1965), Ronald Reagan (1981) and George Bush (1989) make no specific mention of scripture. Reagan (1981), like Nixon (1969), references someone other than Scripture, Winston Churchill and Joseph Warren. Bill Clinton, however, returns to the Word for inaugural speech support by incorporating a direct scripture quote, Galatians 6:9, “and let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not” (para. 41). Where Clinton’s reference differs from those before him, he does directly quote the Bible in saying “the scripture says,” (para. 41) and yet he does not say, as Carter (1977) did specifically, which scripture he was reading he simply left it as “scripture.”

The Scripture reference in George W. Bush’s (2001) inaugural speech came and went so quickly it is almost forgettable. Bush (2001) made no reference to the Bible or Jesus when he spoke the statement, “when we see that wounded traveler on the road to Jericho, we will not pass to the other side” (para. 35). This brief reference is almost so inconspicuous that a person not well versed in the stories of the Judeo-Christian faith may not even recognize it as scripture; however it includes just enough specific details that anyone who went to Sunday school would recognize it. In the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 10, Jesus tells responds to a religious leader’s questioning concerning Mosaic Law with a parable. In this story, a Jewish man was traveling to Jericho when he was attacked, stripped, beaten, and robbed. As the story goes, the man lay on the road and was passed over by both a priest and a temple assistant. However, when a Samaritan came along, a race that, as the Scripture tells was despised by the Jews, he felt compassion for the man, came to his aid, took him to an inn to be cared for and paid his bill. Therefore, in the context of Bush’s (2001) address, he is using this parable to incite believers in the United States not to be like the pious religious rulers of the story, the priest and the temple worker, who would pass over a person in need. This is a particularly significant rhetorical use of

scripture because multiple times in the New Testament (ex. Matthew 23, Mark 5, and Luke 11), Jesus also calls his followers not to be like the religious rulers. Therefore, the use of this parable serves to align Clinton's calls to the United States with Jesus' calls to his followers which, to a believer, would carry a significant persuasive weight.

Barack Obama (2009) utilizes a similar technique to Clinton (1993) as he spoke, "in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things" (para. 9). This reference however, is indirectly related to a Bible verse from 1 Corinthians, chapter 13. The verse does speak of growing into a man and putting the ways of childhood behind however, the context Obama (2009) used the verse does not align with the context the scripture had come, which suggests that his incorporation of scripture was to provide biblical support for his own agenda. The second half of 1 Corinthians 13 the chapter the President referenced is concerned with the second coming of Christ and the way followers of Christ will then see the grander picture and become mature (Sproul and Mathison, 2010). The context in which Obama (2009) references this verse is concerning the strength and perseverance of the nation toward equality, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness.

This particular Biblical reference taken out of context speaks to the inference I draw here concerning nearly all of the inaugural uses of Scripture: presidential inaugural addresses incorporate Scripture in order to provide Divine support for their claims concerning the nation. This specific claim has dangerous implications both morally and ethically insofar as the usage of scripture in this way provides the president with Divine support for his claim, a support that cannot be argued with. It is essentially an infinitely powerful rhetorical tool in the hands of a president who aims to rally support of any deistic American. This positioning of biblical teachings or parables as support for a particular president's plans and agendas would appeal to

the Judeo-Christian who recognizes the Bible as holy and believes its words are true and good. From Roosevelt (1933) to Obama (2009) each Scriptural reference serves a specific purpose within the inaugural speech, that is, to support the claims of the President. The Scripture itself is not the focal point, but rather the authority it carries. For example, when Clinton (1993) proclaims, “let us not be weary in well-doing...” (para. 41) in the conclusion of his speech, this call is strengthened simply because it comes from God. As a quote from a previous President, a famous historian, or an eloquent poet enhances an inaugural address, even more so do words from the Bible to a person of faith. If a person is a believer in God, then His Word carries significant authority; if a person is not a believer in God, then a reference to the Bible will carry no more or less weight than a quote from a philosopher or historian. Therefore, the use of Biblical support brings only benefit to the inaugural speech by appealing to a believer and remaining hidden from or neutral to the non-believer.

The 21st Century and a New Side of History

The rhetoric of the inaugural address delivered by in the turn of the twenty-first century signified a shift in American religious culture and identity from one nation under God, to a nation of religious patchwork. In the body of Obama’s (2009) inaugural speech, he spoke, “we are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus-and non-believers” (para. 23). Obama described American history as a “patchwork heritage” (para. 23). This use of this language is the foundation for the argument that this term describes a shift in American religiosity as can be seen reflected in the inaugural address.

Obama’s predecessor, George W. Bush (2001) is the first to incorporate any mention of a religion other than one from Judeo-Christian tradition. The mention is brief, yet substantial. In a

discussion concerning prayer, Bush (2001) expressed a need for prayer and a desire for any “church and charity, synagogue and mosque” (para. 33) to lend their hearts. Obama (2009) himself delivered an address that related to God in a way much unlike many of his predecessors. Where Bush (2001) took the initial steps of mentioning scripture in an inconspicuous manner and of giving mention to religious beliefs and practices other than those of the Judeo-Christian tradition, Obama (2009) furthered the initiatives.

Obama’s (2009) mention of Scripture was ambiguous, paraphrased, and nearly unnoticeable. Although the claim within his inaugural speech is direct, the particular scripture is paraphrased in such a way that the original passage does not relate to the way he uses the reference. There was no specific reference or direct quote of scripture, but enough for the God-believing listener to find him/herself satisfied. The address was void of God until the final remarks, which followed the above mentioned God bless America trend, and it incorporated, as Bush (2001) had previously, mention of other religious faiths. The American identity Obama (2009) boasted was not one of faith or of God’s blessing, like the previous presidents described, but rather an identity “shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth” (para. 23). This identity is not one nation under God, but one nation composed of unique humanity developed from influences of all cultures and beliefs. If the inaugural address is a reflection of American religiosity, as this thesis argues, then this shift in inaugural language signifies a shift in the relationship between God and the United States from a nation that recognizes and acknowledges God as its creator, author, and benefactor, to a nation made up of multiple views of God, multiple gods, and no gods at all.

Furthermore, Obama (2009) made an appeal within his address directly to “the Muslim world” (para. 24) describing the United States’ intentions as “based on a mutual interest and

mutual respect” (para. 24). This appeal is also a unique element of the twenty-first century inaugural address because it is the first time⁴ a president spoke directly to non-Americans in his inaugural speech. Obama discusses America’s role in the world as responsible for “ushering in a new era of peace” (para. 23), which immediately precedes his discussion of the United States as a patchwork nation. In doing so, he positions the United States as a powerful peacekeeper because it essentially has a hand in each pot, having been a culture formed by all other cultures. In 2009, when Obama delivered his inaugural address, the United States had significant interests in the Middle East. In 2001, the “War on Terror,” (Amoore 2006) focused particularly on Muslim countries associated with Islamic terrorism, began. These concepts contribute to the understanding of the extent to which Obama’s inaugural served to position the United States as ushering in the era of peace he spoke about in paragraph 23 of his address.

“God calls us to shape an uncertain destiny” (para. 30), Obama (2009) declares as his address neared a closing. This proclamation is also a unique use of God insofar as it is the first time a president made a specific claim about God’s will for the United States. Where previous presidents claimed to trust God’s will and rely on it for hope, Obama (2009) wields God’s will as a motivating tool. This modification in the use of God further suggests a shift in the Nation’s relationship with God from a Deity to rely upon to Deity whose will is not providential, but rather able to be used rhetorically for the specific purpose of persuading the citizens to support a particular president’s political agenda.

Lastly, Obama (2009) preaches in his inaugural speech a message of strength and of tolerance. In paragraph twenty-four, Obama proclaims, “to those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of

⁴ For the purpose of this argument, I also briefly analyzed George W. Bush’s second inaugural address in order to verify the claim.

history; but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.” This extraordinarily powerful statement, although it does not concern God or any religious tradition, speaks to the reality that the twenty-first century in the United States is a new page in history where ideally, truth, unity, and tolerance reign.

The twenty-first century is a new page in history for American presidential rhetoric, for inaugural address rhetoric, and for God’s place in America. Where God and his grace, blessing, and providential will once existed commonly within the inaugural genre, He now is more so a short reference positioned primarily in support of the president’s perspective or a closing remark of God’s blessing. All this is to say that American religion has taken a turn and the proof is in the rhetorical Presidency. Political leaders are reflections of United States’ values, beliefs, and desires. Whomever is elected to office is a representative literally and figuratively of the population at large and his or her words are a reflection of the words of the Nation. When the President of the United States delivers an inaugural speech, he/she is speaking to those whom he/she now leads in effort to re-unify, inspire, motivate and give hope. His/her words then are reflections of what unifies, inspires, motivates, and gives hope to the people. Therefore, when God’s grace, peace, and providence are a significant element of an inaugural speech, as in those of Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower, it is evident through analysis of the inaugural genre as a reflection of American religiosity, that there is an element of the United States’ identity that finds some form of safety and hope in God’s grace. However, when God is pressed only to the signature “God bless America” conclusion and Scripture becomes a quiet reference, a rhetorical tool, or an uncontextualized paraphrase, it is clear that God and Scripture are no longer points of shelter, hope, and security for the American people. Moreover, when the inaugural speeches boast of the faith of the Nation and the faiths of our forefathers, it is evident that our most basic

identity lies in that faith; yet when the inaugural speeches of the twenty-first century widen to incorporate all faiths including a lack of faith, it is evident that the identity of America is no longer rooted in faith, and instead in the freedom to believe or not believe. We have always had this freedom, of belief or unbelief. However, in the reflection gathered from the inaugural addresses, it can be understood through the shifts in the rhetorical use of God in the inaugural genre that this particular freedom is both new and on the rise.

Barack Obama's (2009) claim toward those who "are on the wrong side of history" (para. 24) is not isolated to his brief list within the statement; but rather, to all those who do not see that American identity has changed, the genre of the inaugural address has changed, the rhetorical presidency has changed. The United States has turned a new page in history and look back to those on the other side, to use Obama's (2009) metaphor, willing to extend an open hand to all those who will unclench their fists.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

This thesis served to discover both collective trends and individual uses of God in presidential inaugural addresses, specific functions of the use of Scripture, and ultimately to claim that the inaugural addresses of the twenty-first century, particularly that of President Obama's, represented a significant shift in American religiosity and therefore in presidential rhetoric. Chapter 4 provided an individual analysis of the first inaugural addresses delivered from each president from Roosevelt in 1933 to Obama in 2009. After a detailed individual analysis of the religious rhetoric in these speeches, Chapter 5 compared and analyzed the genre of inaugural speeches within and against each other in order to locate trends, categories, and functions of the references to God and the Bible.

First in my research I found a relatively numerically consistent presence of God; however, upon closer reading, the variations in context revealed themselves. I discovered trends that carried either through a few presidents or many. Concerning those trends that re-appeared in multiple subsequent inaugural addresses, it would appear that presidents recognize and acknowledge previous inaugural speech uses of God and replicate and incorporate them into their own address. This replication suggests that the president's continually say the positive effects of God references and chose to perpetuate the trend in order to wield the political power that accompanied the use of God in an inaugural speech.

I noticed additional references to a Deity, aside from the use of the name God, for example, Almighty, Creator, and Author. Each of these references served a particular purpose,

whether it be making claims concerning God's nature, requesting his continued blessing, or to justify a particular issue, such as equality, through the lens of God's original creative design. As the president demonstrated the power of God as Almighty, Creator, and Author within his inaugural address, he positioned the power of God in support of their leadership. Thus, these claims about God's powerful nature served to enhance the perception of the president's Divinely given and supported power. The overarching rhetorical function of these references to God and scripture are appeals to the Christian American and Divine support for their particular presidency. This is problematic because using God as a rhetorical support for his/her decisions presents moral and ethical concerns in presidential rhetoric because the use of God as a rhetorical tool grants the president particular manipulative powers over any believers.

I discovered both explicit and implicit uses of Scripture, as well as verses that were directly quoted and those paraphrased. The Biblical references present in the inaugural speeches from 1933-2009 served to support the content of the president's inaugural speech. In the twentieth century, scripture references were more direct; as the years passed, so did the presence of the Biblical reference. While Scripture did not leave the genre entirely, it shrank to an indirect paraphrase or the use of a Biblical reference without naming it as such. Politically, referencing a Scripture without calling it Scripture can still serve the same purpose because a believer should be able to recognize it as biblical with or without a reference and therefore, the president can maintain the appeal to the believers and also to the non-believers because to him/her, the references would go unnoticed. Furthermore, if, as Obama (2009) suggests, the United States is on a new side of history where multiple religions are prominent in the nation and tolerance is both necessary and important, then the president would desire to please all spectrum of believers

by appealing to the Judeo-Christians in a manner that captures their attention and also does not repel the non-believer with biblical metaphor.

Finally, the sum of the research as a whole, I discovered a significant shift in the presidential inaugural genre with respect to references to God and the Bible in the twenty-first century. The addresses of George W. Bush (2001) and Barack Obama (2009) reveal a new patchwork American religiosity. The national identity is no longer simply displayed through the inaugural speeches as primarily Judeo-Christian; instead, it is displayed as one of all faiths and non-faiths alike. It belongs to all cultures, languages, and belief systems. As Obama suggests in 2009, America is now on a new side of history, and the evidence is in the inaugural addresses from 1933-2009.

Significance

This thesis serves to illuminate significant aspects of the United States identity that may otherwise be overlooked. The words spoken by the president of the United States carry a weight and power above any other individual in the nation simply because of his position as president. As such, the rhetoric of the Nation's leader deserves deeper understanding and greater consideration. Through a rhetorical analysis of the inaugural addressed from 1933-2009, this thesis was able to provide a perspective into the trends in the relationship the United States has with God and its association with the President and his power.

The inaugural address is a unique genre with historical and ceremonial significance. It serves to encourage unity and inspire hope. As such, the incorporation of God in these speeches suggests significant implications. The implication of the relationship the United States has with God impacts the understanding of presidential rhetoric and the inaugural address genre. As

discussed in the literature review of this thesis, Zarefsky (2004) asserted that presidential rhetoric scholars are concerned with recurrent patterns. Therefore, the findings of this thesis concerning the patterns in the uses of God, Scripture, and the God bless America conclusion contribute to the body of research pertaining to patterns in presidential rhetoric. Furthermore, Neustadt (1960) described the rhetorical presidency as concerned with the power of the president as a function of the power to persuade. This function of the presidency is inherently related to the religious references through the lens of Domke and Coe (2011) who maintain that political leaders have taken advantage of rhetorical use of God “through calculated, deliberate, and partisan use of faith” (p.7). Therefore, each of these fields may benefit from the findings of this thesis. A deeper understanding of God’s place and position within political language impacts presidential rhetoric insofar as it illuminates the extent to which religious references are intentionally used as a persuasive tool. This research also specifically impacts the genre of the inaugural address insofar as it illuminates a significant aspect of the language and metaphor used in the genre. For example, the examination of the specific use of the signature, God bless America, enlightened one trademark that exists dynamically within the genre itself.

Finally, these findings influence a greater understanding of the functions of United States religious rhetoric because it provides a uniquely positioned perspective through the lenses of communication, rhetoric, and religion concerned with American Religiosity viewed through the lens of the inaugural speech. At its birth, United States’ political actors had a unique relationship with God and religion. This relationship is dynamic, constantly changing, and of multiple influences; therefore, continued research of its relationship with the power of the presidency is necessary.

Limitations and Challenges

The prime limitations of this thesis are in its scope of analysis. First, this thesis analyzes only inaugural addresses from 1933 to the present, and second, this thesis analyzes only the first inaugural address of each president. However, these limitations are the result of strategic research choices. This thesis analyzes the inaugural addresses beginning in 1933, rather than in 1789 with George Washington for two reasons. First, in my initial research, I located research concerning early American inaugural addresses such as George Washington such as McDairmid (1937), Toolin (1983), and Lim (2002); therefore, I decided to shift the scope of research to the twentieth and twenty first century. Second, Domke (2010) identified Ronald Reagan as a significant turning point in presidential religious rhetoric, which led me to choose an equal parameter of years before and after this proposed turning point.

The second limitation of this research is the choice to analyze only the first inaugural address of each president from 1933-2009. I made this decision rather inductively after initially intending to analyze each address from 1933-2009. After beginning my research on the inaugural genre and determining the purpose of the inaugural address, I determined that the significant rhetorical text is the first inaugural speech delivered by a particular president because it is the first moment this particular person addresses the United States as president. The inaugural speech serves to reunite a broken nation after the division of an election; therefore, its particular use of language and metaphor is essential. When a president delivers a second inaugural speech, the rhetorical situation is different. This person has already served one term and has earned the support and favor of the United States during this time, enough so to warrant re-election. Therefore, the need for unity is lower because unity under this particular president was already established and maintained. Furthermore, I did not address those inaugurals delivered by an

incumbent president particularly because the nation is more familiar with the character and values of a particular president and therefore, the inaugural speech for an incumbent president is not as necessarily importunate or indicative of an aim to please the nation.

The third limitation is also concerned with the scope of research, but not in terms of years analyzed, or in which particular addresses were chosen, but rather in terms of the lens used to analyze the texts. In this thesis, I conducted the analysis as a genre study looking specifically at the inaugural addresses. This study analyzed and compared the inaugural speeches as individual texts as well as compared them to each other. What this thesis did not do is situate each inaugural speech within its particular moment in history. This thesis did not position each text historically because I chose instead to study the nature of the genre inclusively, that is, focusing narrowly on only the rhetoric of the inaugural speeches themselves, regarding their own purposes as a function of the rhetorical presidency, and not regarding its place in history.

Further Research

This thesis serves to prompt further questions regarding the rhetorical presidency, United States politics, American religion, genre studies, and inaugural address scholarship. First and foremost, this thesis suggests that the religious nature of the United States is dynamic and therefore, as years continue to pass, new inaugural addresses will be spoken and the need to continue the research on the inaugural speeches in order to draw inferences regarding the relationship between God and the United States will continue to persist.

Furthermore, this thesis highlights Domke and Coe's (2011) suggestion that presidents use scripture intentionally in order to provide Divine support for their own agenda, which provides an increase in their persuasive power with United States citizens who are believers in

God. This suggestion could be further unpacked with a contextual research study incorporating the historical framework of an individual president in order to determine if his use of God or Scripture is because of a personal belief or as a rhetorical tool or a reflection of the events of the time.

This thesis provides an analytical pattern used to rhetorically analyze the inaugural genre. This same analytical pattern could also be used in further research to analyze other genres of presidential rhetoric such as state of the union addresses or campaign speeches. For example, a potential study prompted by this thesis could be a genre study of the use of God and the Bible in the state of the union addresses could serve to even further illuminate aspects of the relationship between God and the United States.

Final Thoughts

In the introduction of this thesis, I quoted the famous French political thinker and historian, Alexis de Tocqueville, who arrived to the United States in the early nineteenth century and upon his arrival observed, “the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention” (p. 1). This is the aspect of religious curiosity that sparked my initial interest in this project, and this is the concept that carried it to conclusion.

The United States is a unique organism, one with a myriad of influences and a complicated history. A significant element in American history is the role, character, and providence of God. This relationship can be observed in a variety of ways, one of which is through presidential inaugural addresses.

This thesis aimed to determine the relationship between God and the United States that can be seen reflected in the texts of presidential inaugural addresses from 1933-2009. What I

have discovered is that the nation's relationship with God has changed through the years, and I propose that it will continue to change. This suggestion was determined through careful analysis of the individual inaugural speeches and their uses of God and the Bible, as well as comparative analyses of the speech texts. The inaugural addresses in the twentieth century display God as creator, author, and giver of freedom and blessing. And yet, the place we find ourselves now, in the twenty first century, is a new side of history for religion in America where this uniquely religious nation founded on the precious freedoms of politics and religion, the blending of cultures, and the grace and blessings of the Almighty God, now finds its identity reflected in the inaugural genre composed of all cultures, all beliefs, and all types of faiths or lack thereof, in God.

To conclude this thesis in a manner fit for its context, thank you, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Megan is a newlywed who composed much of this thesis with her coffee mug bearing the Thomas Jefferson quote, “I cannot live without books.” She is indebted to Rhetoric for illuminating the majestic art of words and creating a lens through which she will forever see the world. Megan recently learned to play the bass guitar because she needed something else to do with her hands when she wasn’t writing this Thesis. She will forever “bleed garnet and gold” after spending six amazing years at Florida State University. She is a Graduate Student, Teacher, Student, Barista, Writer, Wife, Youth Leader, Daughter, Sister, and Friend.