

The Fool on the Hill

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Now that Mike Huckabee has joined the top tier of Republican candidates, it's worth taking a closer look at one of his chief evangelical supporters, Tim LaHaye, the bestselling Rapturite co-author of the Left Behind series (63 million copies sold!).

As it happens, in researching my new book *The Fall of the House of Bush* (for more information, go to <http://www.craigunger.com>, I traveled undercover with LaHaye and about 90 American evangelical Christians to the Holy Land for the "Walking Where Jesus Walked" tour in 2005.

The most astonishing moment of my journey took place when we reached Megiddo, Israel. Alexander the Great, Saladin, Napoleon, and other renowned warriors all fought great battles there. But according to the book of Revelation, the hill of Megiddo--better known as Armageddon--will be the site of the cataclysmic battle between the forces of Christ and the Antichrist. After LaHaye and his colleagues explained the prophecies of the book of Revelation, we walked down the hill overlooking the Jezreel Valley. "Can you imagine this entire valley filled with blood?" one of his followers asked. "That would be a 200-mile-long river of blood, four and a half feet deep. We've done the math. That's the blood of as many as two and a half billion people."

As for when the Final Conflict will take place, LaHaye's followers assured me that the Bible says that "of that day and hour knoweth no man." One of them had especially strong ideas about when the battle would take place, however. "Not soon enough," she said. "Not soon enough."

But even more chilling than these theological fantasies are the political realities LaHaye and his followers embrace. In his 1980 book *Battle for the Mind*, LaHaye depicted America as a Bible-based country under siege by an elite group of secular humanists conspiring to destroy Christianity. He asserted that secular humanism is "the world's greatest evil and the most deceptive of all religious philosophies." It is characterized by its "particular hatred toward Christianity," and it has been turning our godly nation into one that promotes Darwinism and the mass murder of the unborn, promiscuity, the homosexual agenda, and more.

As LaHaye sees it, the word "secular" is not merely a morally neutral term that means "worldly." It means "ungodly," and, in his view, there are godly people--who are on the road to Rapture--and then there is the rest of the world, which is either complicit with the Anti-Christ, or, worse, actively assisting him. As a result, LaHaye argues, good evangelicals should no longer think of humanists merely as harmless citizens who just happen not to attend church. "We must remove all humanists from public office," he writes, "and replace them with pro-moral political leaders."

These views may sound extreme, but that does not mean they are marginal. The Council for National Policy, a powerful but secretive umbrella group founded by LaHaye more than 25 years

ago, has had extraordinary access to the Oval Office during the Bush-Cheney era. As the late Jerry Falwell told me in 2005, "Within the Council is a smaller group called the Arlington Group. We often call the White House and talk to Karl Rove while we are meeting. Everyone takes our calls." Falwell added that they were consulted on crucial issues such as Supreme Court nominees.

Reports of the death of the Christian Right have been greatly exaggerated. This time around, their man is Huckabee.