

Key conservative may back McCain

Conservative Christian leader James Dobson has softened his stance against Republican presidential hopeful **John McCain**, saying he could reverse his position and endorse the Arizona senator despite serious misgivings.

"I never thought I would hear myself saying this," Dobson said in a radio broadcast to air today. "... While I am not endorsing Senator John McCain, the possibility is there that I might."

Dobson and other evangelical leaders unimpressed by McCain increasingly are taking a lesser-of-two-evils approach to the 2008 race. Dobson and his guest, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Albert Mohler, spend most of the pretaped Focus on the Family radio program criticizing Democratic candidate **Barack Obama**, getting to McCain at the very end.

In an advance copy provided to The Associated Press, Dobson said that while neither candidate is consistent with his views, McCain's positions are closer by a wide margin.

"There's nothing dishonorable in a person rethinking his or her positions, especially in a constantly changing political context," Dobson said in a statement to the AP. "Barack Obama contradicts and threatens everything I believe about the institution of the family and what is best for the nation. His radical positions on life, marriage and national security force me to reevaluate the candidacy of our only other choice, John McCain."

Earlier, Dobson had said he could not in good conscience vote for McCain, citing the candidate's support for embryonic stem cell research and opposition to a federal constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage, as well as concerns about McCain's temper and foul language.

Dobson said on the radio program he must consider McCain's record against abortion rights and support for smaller government, and added McCain "seems to understand the Muslim threat." He also indicated McCain's choice of a running mate will be a factor.

Of his new position, Dobson said in the statement to the AP, "If that is a flip-flop, then so be it."

Dobson is considered a powerful voice in conservative evangelical Christianity; his radio broadcast reaches 1.5 million U.S. listeners daily. Critics argue his influence is waning, pointing to a younger generation of leaders pushing to broaden the movement's agenda.

Dr. Dobson enthused about Palin choice

The New York Times

August 30, 2008

Campaigns Shift as McCain Choice Alters the Race

... "We had a solid Republican and evangelical base," said Charlie Black, a senior adviser to Mr. McCain. "But now it's going to be very intense."

James C. Dobson, the influential conservative Christian leader who said in the primaries that he could never vote for Mr. McCain, said the selection of Ms. Palin had won him over. If he went into the voting booth today, Mr. Dobson told the talk radio host Dennis Prager on Friday, "I would pull that lever."

If Ms. Palin motivates evangelicals to rally behind the Republican ticket as they did for Mr. Bush in 2004, it could prove significant in states like Iowa and Ohio, where Republicans won by slim margins in 2004. ...

Dear Friend,

What if the Left takes over?

We've been examining that question around here for the past year, and with Election Day now just weeks away, the answer is as troubling as ever. If Barack Obama wins the White House and liberals fortify their ranks in Congress, here are some headlines that you and I can expect to read:

- Obama signs Freedom of Choice Act, invalidating all state and federal pro-life laws
- Defense of Marriage Act repealed; gay lobby celebrates federal benefits and marriage rights
- Largest tax increase in history to pay for new entitlements, foreign aid
- 'Out' in the barracks: Homosexuality hits the armed forces
- It's Hillary! Obama's Supreme Court pick should sail through Senate

If reading that list gives you heartburn *now*, just imagine how you'll feel if those headlines become *reality*. As an organization that champions virtue in public policy, we've pondered that eventuality. And that's why we're doing everything we can to alert values voters about where their candidates stand and what's at stake this fall. Let me share with you what your support is allowing us to do in two ways—publicly and privately.

The public battle: Informing voters through the media

You may have noticed that the major news outlets have been citing Focus Action a lot lately. That's not by accident. The media team here at Focus Action does a remarkable job of taking the work that we do and marketing it to the media in a way that captures their attention. That allows us to use their own megaphones to get our message out to far more people.

Two great examples of this are recent Focus Action radio broadcasts in which we addressed the presidential race. First, Dr. Dobson took the lead in exposing the truth behind the Obama speech in which the Illinois senator essentially mocked the authority of Scripture and twisted the plain meaning of the Constitution.



The marketing ingenuity of our Focus Action media team turned this into a major national story, with clips from our broadcast airing on ABC's *World News Tonight*, CBS and every major cable news network. Media coverage was intense: The Associated Press' coverage of the broadcast was the top story on *The Drudge Report* (TheDrudgeReport.com) for several hours, and by the end of the day there were **more than 400 TV news reports and radio stories within the country's top 20 markets alone**. In addition, our message went out in **332 newspaper articles**. The total potential audience of all that coverage was **more than 100 million viewers, listeners and readers**. The "earned media" value of this coverage (what it would have cost us to purchase the airtime and print space) was more than \$2 million!

A second Focus Action broadcast also became a big story. For months, there has been significant discussion nationally about Dr. Dobson's comments that were critical of John McCain. Like many of you, I suspect, Dr. Dobson was not a fan of Sen. McCain during the primaries. In fact, he even said there was no way he could vote for McCain, even if the Arizona senator should win his party's nomination.

As the general election choices became clear, however, Dr. Dobson felt compelled to re-evaluate his position and let his radio listeners know that he might vote for McCain. Once again, our media department put together a stellar plan for multiplying the impact of this broadcast, and the results were astounding. Another Associated Press story was quickly carried nationwide, and Dr. Dobson's encouraging comments about McCain turned up everywhere from *The New York Times* and *USA Today* to *Hannity & Colmes* and *CNN Headline News*. The media strategy spawned more than 150 TV and radio stories that **reached a total potential audience of more than 50 million**—with an earned media value of more than half a million dollars.

Ultimately, there were four reasons for Dr. Dobson's re-evaluation of McCain: 1) Sen. McCain's powerful comments during the Saddleback Forum with Rick Warren, 2) The Republican Party platform, which is the strongest pro-life, pro-family platform in memory, 3) McCain's selection of Gov. Sarah Palin and 4) The policy positions of Barack Obama. Even as I write, Dr. Dobson continues to get major media coverage on these points from *The New York Times*, Fox News and elsewhere.

The private battle: Targeting voters directly

As important as the mass media is, there's no substitute for direct contact with individual citizens—letting them know where their candidates stand and encouraging citizens to take action. **Your support for Focus Action is allowing us to do that in a big way in up to 16 states with key U.S. Senate and House races.**

When a voter in one of these areas receives a mailer or an e-mail with a side-by-side comparison of the candidates, it doesn't make a big, public splash like a TV ad. But dollar-for-dollar, it's the most effective way to reach that voter and convince them to take action. We're also making it easy for them to share the information with others by copying, printing or forwarding. And we'll be using carefully targeted radio ads.

Finally, you may recall that earlier this year I told you about Tim Gill and his stealth, multi-million-dollar effort to take over state legislatures for his pro-homosexual agenda. His success in several states in 2006 has prompted us to launch a major research project that has uncovered—in advance this time—his targets for 2008. We'll be putting that information to use by again using a two-pronged strategy—public and private—to let voters in those specific states know what he is doing.

I'll hold off on more details or samples right now to avoid revealing too much information to our opponents, but I'll report back to you later on. Meanwhile, though, thank you for your sacrificial gifts that

allow us to do this work on your behalf. Above all, please be in prayer for our work and for the nation.

Sincerely,



Tom Minnery
Senior Vice President
Government and Public Policy

P.S. You should be aware that contributions have been well below budget all summer, which has put us in a position where we may have to scale back some of the plans I've mentioned. **Your gift now, however, can still help ensure that we are able to go full force with the full plan—right up to November 4.**

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY ACTION™

Dedicated to the Defense of Moral Values and the Family

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Rocky Mountain News

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Dobson criticizes Obama

Candidate distorts the Bible, Focus on Family leader says

By Eric Gorski
ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLORADO SPRINGS — As Barack Obama tries to broaden his outreach to evangelical voters, one of the movement's biggest names, James Dobson, has accused the likely Democratic presidential nominee of distorting the Bible and pushing a "fruitcake interpretation" of the Constitution.

The criticism, to be aired today on Dobson's Focus on the Family radio program, comes shortly after an Obama aide suggested a meeting at the organization's headquarters, said Tom Minnery, senior vice president for government and public policy at Focus on the Family.

The conservative Christian group provided The Associated Press with a copy of the pre-taped radio segment, containing excerpts of a speech Obama gave in June 2006.

"Even if we did have only Christians in our midst, if we expelled every non-Christian from the United States of

America, whose Christianity would we teach in the schools?" Obama said.

"Would we go with James Dobson's or Al Sharpton's?" referring to the civil rights leader.

Dobson took aim at examples Obama cited in asking which biblical passages should guide public policy — chapters like Leviticus, which Obama said suggests slavery is OK and eating shellfish is an abomination, or Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, "a passage that is so radical that it's doubtful that our own Defense Department would survive its application." "Folks haven't been reading their

Bibles," Obama said. Dobson and Minnery accused Obama of wrongly equating Old Testament texts and dietary codes that no longer apply to Jesus' teachings in the New Testament.

"I think he's deliberately distorting the traditional understanding of the Bible to fit his own world view, his own confused theology," Dobson said.

Joshua DuBois, director of religious affairs for Obama's campaign, said in a statement that a

full reading of Obama's speech shows he is committed to reaching out to people of faith and standing up for families. "Obama is proud to have the support of millions of Americans of faith and looks forward to working across religious lines to bring our country together," DuBois said.

Dobson reserved some of his harshest criticism for Obama's argument that the religiously motivated must frame debates over issues like abortion not just in their own religion's terms but in arguments accessible to all people.

He said Obama, who supports abortion rights, is trying to govern by the "lowest common denominator of morality," labeling it "a fruitcake interpretation of the Constitution." "Am I required in a democracy to conform my efforts in the political arena to his bloody notion of what is right with regard to the lives of tiny babies?" Dobson said. The program was paid for by a Focus on the Family affiliate whose donations are taxed, Dobson said, so it's legal for that group to get more involved in politics.

"Even if we did have only Christians in our midst, if we expelled every non-Christian from the United States of America, whose Christianity would we teach in the schools? Would we go with James Dobson's or Al Sharpton's?"

Barack Obama

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James Dobson