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## Bush Tells Group He Sees a 'Third Awakening'

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President Bush said yesterday that he senses a "Third Awakening" of religious devotion in the United States that has coincided with the nation's struggle with international terrorists, a war that he depicted as "a confrontation between good and evil."

Bush told a group of conservative journalists that he notices more open expressions of faith among people he meets during his travels, and he suggested that might signal a broader revival similar to other religious movements in history. Bush noted that some of Abraham Lincoln's strongest supporters were religious people "who saw life in terms of good and evil" and who believed that slavery was evil. Many of his own supporters, he said, see the current conflict in similar terms.

"A lot of people in America see this as a confrontation between good and evil, including me," Bush said during a 1 1/2 -hour Oval Office conversation on cultural changes and a battle with terrorists that he sees lasting decades. "There was a stark change between the culture of the '50s and the '60s -- boom -- and I think there's change happening here," he added. "It seems to me that there's a Third Awakening."

The First Great Awakening refers to a wave of Christian fervor in the American colonies from about 1730 to 1760, while the Second Great Awakening is generally believed to have occurred from 1800 to 1830.

Some scholars and writers have debated for years whether a Third Awakening has been taking place, although some identify other awakenings in U.S. history. Bush aides, including Karl Rove, have read Robert William Fogel's "The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism."

Bush has been careful discussing the battle with terrorists in religious terms since he had

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to apologize for using the word "crusade" in 2001. He often stresses that the war is not against Islam but against those who corrupt it. In his comments yesterday, aides said Bush was not casting the war as a religious struggle but was describing American cultural changes in a time of war.

"He's drawing a parallel in terms of a resurgence, in dangerous times, of people going back to their religion," said one aide, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the session was not open to other journalists. "This is not 'God is on our side' or anything like that."

The White House did not release a transcript of Bush's remarks, but National Review posted highlights on its Web site. On another topic, Bush rejected sending more troops to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas to find Osama bin Laden. "One hundred thousand troops there in Pakistan is not the answer. It's someone saying 'Guess what' and then the kinetic action begins," he said, meaning an informer disclosing bin Laden's location.

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