

# Reagan personality . . .

Continued from Page 4

The personality of Ronald Reagan has transcended political ideology. In 1976, it was still possible to Goldwaterize Reagan by telling the untutored in New Hampshire that what he had in mind with Social Security was "throwing old people out in the snow." Because New Hampshire did not know Ronald Reagan.

But now the nation knows him. All America has seen through television his cheery, thumbs-up patriotism; Americans have heard him speaking of subjects they did not understand, in language they could understand. Laughing at his string of one-liners, they worried along with Mrs. Reagan through his days of recovery.

So, it is no longer an available option

as they say, for Reagan's opponents to paint him as a hard-hearted man who takes pleasure in cutting food stamps for the working poor. Not since Dwight Eisenhower has the credibility of the Oval Office been so high. If Reagan says budget cuts are good for America, many of the Americans who are having their budgets cut will believe him.

(Even Tip O'Neill who agrees with this Republican President on almost nothing finds his company more congenial than that of the Democratic predecessor with whom he agreed on almost everything.)

With his personality, Reagan has also captured something intangible that always seemed the property of the Democratic Party. That party used to be the party of dreams, while the GOP was the party of

efficiency. Not so today. In the late campaign, it was Jimmy Carter, engineer, talking about an era of limits and "national malaise" while Ronald Reagan, misty-eyed, was going to lead us all to a "shining city on a hill."

There is another reason Reagan is indispensable, and that is the social issues which the "moderate" Republicans wish desperately would go away.

The importance of these issues is not simply, or even primarily, in their political utility—i.e., they split the Democratic

Party between its ideological liberals and social conservatives. Their importance lies in the fact that they reflect the Reaganite view of the Good Society—after we have inflation under control and full employment.

Only through great leadership will society come again to reflect the values of the majority. Which leads to the conclusion that we can't win this one without The Gipper.

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Distributed by The Chicago Tribune—N.Y.  
News Syndicate, Inc.

# Credo compels Watts

Denver—Ten years ago environmentalists were inspiring a nation to clean up the planet. Today, they're wondering what's happened to many of their followers.

Most are laying low, for fear of incurring the wrath of new Interior Secretary James G. Watt. Many Americans may now understand why he's called "the apostle of pillage"—especially after his recent decision to release over 1 million acres of environmentally-sensitive California coastal waters to oil and gas interests.

**glen & shearer**

There have been competing descriptions of Watt. Some say he's simply a tool of development interests, while others suggest he's a man who follows his own principles.

To many in this city, the former president of the Mountain States Legal Foundation represents those development interests who have turned a once-quiet Denver into a polluted, skyscrapered metropolis. He is identified with the boom towns and the strip mines.

But others who know Watt's private side talk not of bricks and oil, but of Bibles and prayer meetings. If there's any monument to Jim Watt, they say, it's the Aurora First Assembly of God, a Christian congregation in Denver's southern suburbs that believes in the literal interpretation of the Bible.

When writing about Watt, the press has only fleetingly called him "deeply religious." Yet, reporters have overlooked Watt's belief that man was intended to subdue and profit from the earth in anticipation of eternal salvation. This credo is the compelling force behind Watt's professional performance and why he just doesn't understand environmentalists.

In 1964, Watt and his wife Lani were

living modest church-going lives in suburban Maryland. Jim was writing legislation speeches for Wyoming Sen. Milward L. Simpson, who'd hired him out of law school to work on his 1962 campaign.

Although the circumstances are unclear, Jim and Lani were "born again" that year. They became "charismatic" Christians, the kind who are known to speak in tongues and believe themselves to be agents of God. Sen. Simpson's family also involved themselves in the Watt's ordeal.

Undoubtedly Watt's charismatic development had much to do with his professional behavior. He's been known to ask for silence at staff meetings, participate in local prayer groups and keep a Bible in his desk drawer.

With this background, it's not surprising Watt practices what he believes the Bible says: keeping the "back 40" untilled is a tantamount to sloth.

Of course, it's difficult to slight someone for his religious beliefs.

But that doesn't get Watt off the hook. His new post gives him extensive discretionary power over public lands and their resources. While the Bible may influence his decisions, so will the development interests who have sponsored his former employer, Mountain State Legal Foundation.

One family friend says Watt will "bend over backwards" to accommodate environmental interests. And some corporate lawyers hope Watt doesn't jeopardize the working relationship they've so painstakingly developed with environmental attorneys.

But even if environmentalists ask Watt for moderation, can he compromise his religious beliefs?

How well the likable Watts walks the line between heaven and earth will determine the kind of fight environmentalists have before them.

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