

The Evolution of the “City Upon a Hill”

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**Zjistěte, odkud se objevil pojem "Město ležící na hoře".
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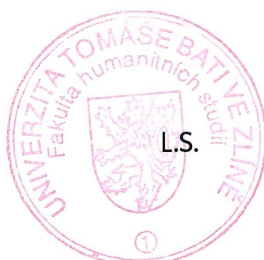
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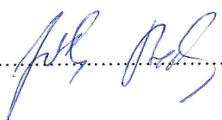
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce prozkoumává vývoj termínu “Město ležící na hoře” v průběhu historie a především v dějinách Spojených států Amerických. V počátcích této práce se zjišťuje odkud se objevil pojem Město ležící na hoře, který sahá do 2000 let staré historie do doby Ježíše Krista. Hlavním dějištěm zkoumání je pak doba po roce 1630, kdy byl pojem, Město ležící na hoře, poprvé použit v souvislosti se vznikající Amerikou. Tato práce bude hledat jednotlivá užití daného pojmu za konkrétních okolností a bude se soustředit na význam v jednotlivých výskytech a jak se vzájemně odlišují. Cílem zkoumání je odhalit vývoj, jak formální, tak i významové části tohoto pojmu, který se stal nedílnou součástí Americké rétoriky, jak politicky, tak i ideologicky.

Klíčová slova: Město ležící na hoře, John Winthrop, Ježíš Kristus, Spojené státy, Izraelité, Bible, Puritáni, Manifest Destiny, Studená válka, světlo, Dům na skále, historie Spojených států, Ronald W. Reagan, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Barrack Obama, americká identita.

ABSTRACT

This thesis documents the evolution of the term “City upon a Hill” in history in general and in the history of the United States of America in particular. In the beginnings of this thesis the origins of the City upon a Hill are traced; they reach back two millenia to the times of Jesus Christ. The main time interval to be researched starts after the year 1630, which is the year when the term City upon a Hill is used for the first time in connection with America. This thesis will search through individual occurrences of the term, considering the circumstances, and will focus on the meaning in each instance and how they differ from each other. The goal of the research is to reveal the evolution of both form and meaning of the term, which has become inseparable part of American rhetoric, both politically and ideologically.

Keywords: City upon a Hill, John Winthrop, Jesus Christ, United States, Israelites, Bible, Puritans, Manifest Destiny, Cold War, light, House upon a Rock, history of the United States, Ronald W. Reagan, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Barrack Obama, American identity.

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During life, we grow, and we sometimes find ourselves saying “this was the hardest thing I have ever had to do”. Later we get used to it. Then a new challenge comes, harder than before, and we again stand in front of a “mountain” that we are not sure that we can climb, but eventually we most often do. It is hard, it is unknown. Once we are over it we are not just in another stage of life but we have learned a few things along the way. This thesis seemed like a mountain I could not climb. It was big, it was unknown and the time always seemed short. Nevertheless it is finished.

The main credit goes to my supervisor, Gregory Jason Bell, for his support, feedback which was always to the point and corrections without which I could not finish this task. He asked me difficult questions that helped me to move ahead, and he opened my eyes to a different view of America. His time sacrificed for me and other students can hardly be counted and thanked for properly.

I would like to thank my parents for giving me a good upbringing and for not losing patience with me since I was seen by the teachers as a black sheep. They were supportive when I was not accepted to high school and helped me in looking for another one. And I could never speak English if it were not for their money that helped me to meet native speakers. Thank you both for your love and support.

For little over three years now I have a great friend, someone who is even closer support than my family, and I hope soon will be my family, my fiancée Bea. I would like to thank her for her love and support, and her positive view of things in difficult moments. I love you sweetheart, and I can not wait to spend the rest of my life with you.

Lastly I want to acknowledge and thank God for creating me, giving me a new life in Jesus and showing me the purpose of life, for giving me peace and comfort in times of distress and for the chance to know him and to know his supernatural guidance.

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INTRODUCTION

In opening a door between room “A”, which is illuminated, and room “B”, which is dark, it is not the darkness that invades room “A” but the beams of light from room “A” that penetrate the darkness of room “B”. Even a small candle can lighten a room previously completely dark. People bring light into dark rooms for different reasons. They may want to read, or do homework or paint a picture. Or perhaps a child is scared of the darkness when going to bed and so turns a nightlight on. Motivations vary.

Echoing this simple metaphor, Americans have long held that the United States is a “city upon a hill”, a beacon of light in an otherwise dark world. Even so, the motivations of the men who have used this metaphor have also varied, changing as the orator, needs and circumstances changed.

This thesis will identify the origins of the city upon a hill concept. It will look to American history to identify where, how and by whom the idea was used and the motivation for doing so. Ultimately, this thesis will argue that the City upon a Hill is a national idea with evolving meaning but the same general motivation for its use.

1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY UPON A HILL

1.1 First appearance of the term

In the Bible, Matthew 5:13-16 documents the beginning of Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount". It states:

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.¹

In the text, three items are worthy of note: salt, light and city situated on a mountain. Jesus puts all three together because he tries to highlight a point. He is trying to get a message to his audience and mainly to his disciples. Jesus wanted his disciples to grow into leaders of the church that was about to start. He was well aware of the light and darkness effect explained earlier. Jesus basically asked his disciples and followers to set an example for the rest of the world, and he knew that as the light they shall succeed. To add taste to the tasteless like salt does. Be light when there is darkness on the path of life. Be a city upon a hill which can not be hidden and which sets an example for everyone who sees it. Jesus used this metaphor of city upon a hill because he preached on a hillside and on the hill across the valley was an actual city upon a hill called Safed, which his audience could see at the moment of his speech. It was a very vivid example of what they should be like.²

1.2 What was Jesus' motivation?

Jesus used this idea of the City upon a Hill to tell his disciples to be an example for the whole world. But why should they be an example for the world? At the end of the Bible text is this: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and

¹ Mt 5:13-16 (King James Version).

² The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "Safed," <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vie/Safed.html> (accessed March 9, 2011).

glorify your Father which is in heaven.”³ Here is Jesus’ motivation in two parts: The first part is that people may see good works, while the second is to glorify God, which is actually a consequence of the former.

1.3 The city upon a hill in American history

Jonathan Winthrop is the first one who connected the idea of City upon a Hill with America. Many Americans know about this idea, but not many are actually able to articulate the meaning. Part of the reason for this is that its meaning is changing. But if the meaning changes, how is it possible for the idea of City upon a Hill to survive? It cannot be overlooked that this theme runs throughout American history from 1630 to the present.

The reason for its survival is that the meaning can be easily changed. That is why many used it in their speeches. Americans have a general understanding of the idea, but the specific meaning can be modified to meet the needs of the orator. In the City upon a Hill idea are two major characteristics for Americans, liberty and tradition: Liberty of personal interpretation in meaning and also tradition, in repeated use by multiple important people. These are the reasons for such a wide use, especially in presidential speeches.

1.4 Why other countries do not use this concept

The first reason why other countries do not use the idea of City upon a Hill is the Christian motive. There are not a lot of countries that could be called Christian-based. America is built on Puritanism; its roots are wide from Calvinistic Geneva to the Tudor-Stuart era. Some believe that Puritanism is “the long hard travail which gave birth to the ideal of complete freedom”.⁴ English people who first went to America wanted to build a new country and show others how it could be done. It was a utopian experiment. In comparison, the Spanish did not want to build up a new country, they were happy in Spain. All they wanted was transportable wealth like sugar, gold and indigo. That is why they treated the land and its inhabitants differently, in an often violent and devastating way.

³ Mt 5:16 (King James Version).

⁴ Leonard J. Trinterud, “The Origins of Puritanism,” *Church History* 20, no. 1 (1951): 37.

Second would be a sense of Patriotism. Ever since the Puritans left England because of problems they were experiencing, they pursued unity among them, based in part because Winthrop exhorted them to it in his sermon “A Modell of Christian Charity”. Of course there are other countries where people fled persecution, but it did not seem to get them in the same situation as Puritans in America.

2 JOHN WINTHROP

John Winthrop was born on January 12, 1588 in Edwardson, England to Adam and Anne Browne Winthrop. He studied at Cambridge University and had four wives from which two died during childbirth, one died from natural cause and one survived Winthrop.⁵ He had eleven children. He died on March 26, 1649 and was buried in Boston, Massachusetts. His character was unique.

John Winthrop, the lord of Groton Manor and an esteemed member of the English higher class, was a leader of the Puritan errand into the wilderness of America. Before him, many underwent this journey, and many died because of shipboard illnesses and North Atlantic storms. Those who reached the American shores did not gain much safety. Two-thirds of Virginian colonists died between 1619 and 1625 from illness, Indian attack, or starvation. Nevertheless John Winthrop gave up things he had in England, his position as a justice of the peace and every good thing that English life offered and decided to build a very different kind of community, one that would be set as an example.⁶

Winthrop was well educated and a faithful Christian able to lead and encourage. Winthrop looked at the God given chance to set an example, and he believed in it. He preached a powerful sermon to his Puritan co-travelers called “A Modell of Christian Charity.”⁷ And in that he influenced the future of the American nation.

2.1 A Modell of Christian Charity

This sermon is the first connection between the idea of the City upon Hill and America. It is considered one of the most famous sermons that Winthrop ever preached. God gave him words of exhortation and encouragement that he shared with his fellow travelers. At the end of the sermon, which was given on the deck of the *Arbella* somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean, he metaphorically talks about avoiding a shipwreck, and for that they needed to follow the counsel of Micah 6:8 to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our

⁵ Soyilent Communications, “John Winthrop,” NNDB Tracking the Entire World, <http://www.nndb.com/people/575/000050425/> (accessed April 8, 2011).

⁶ Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan experiment: New England society from Bradford to Edwards* (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 1995) 1.

⁷Michael Burgan, *John Winthrop: Colonial Governor of Massachusetts* (Minneapolis: Compass Point Books, 2006), 11.

God.⁸ He talks about being knit together as one, to entertain each other in brotherly affection and be willing to prune ourselves of our excesses. He urges his listeners to delight in each other and make each other's condition their own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together.

Wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when hee shall make us a prayse and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, "the Lord make it likely that of New England." For wee must consider that wee shall be as a citty upon a hill. The eies of all people are uppon us. Soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our God in this worke wee haue undertaken, and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. Wee shall open the mouthes of enemies to speake evill of the wayes of God, and all professors for God's sake. Wee shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till wee be consumed out of the good land whither wee are a going.⁹

Winthrop put the time on the transatlantic boat to good use, and as they were going into something new and dangerous, Winthrop felt that he needed to prepare everyone for what is to come. He was a good leader and thought a few steps ahead. He knew or guessed well how difficult it was going to be and that they would all need to work together and most of all rely on God himself. Winthrop did not want to wait to speak to his fellow-travelers, because he knew they would not reach only the shore but problems at the same time. Knowing that it is better to instruct people in a time of peace, he preceded the coming circumstances and instructed them in what was to come.

2.1.1 We shall be as a City upon a Hill

Why did he pick this Bible passage? – Motivation and encouragement. In choosing this Bible passage Winthrop tried to accomplish the very same thing Jesus was going for when

⁸“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8 (English Standard Version).

⁹Hanover Historical Text Projects, “John Winthrop: A Modell of Christian charity,” <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html> (accessed April 9, 2011).

he preached it to his disciples and followers 1,600 years prior. Winthrop as well as Jesus wanted them to grow in spirituality, courage and bravery. He was trying to motivate and encourage them. Since most of his fellow travelers were Christians and probably already knew this passage, he applied it.

Winthrop used it for the same reasons other people used this idea of the City upon a Hill later in U.S. history. He knew that Puritans are familiar with the text and its idea, so he used it as an intensifier in the discourse to make it seem familiar and powerful because it is the Word of God.

2.1.2 We are like Israelites - the Puritan Legacy

Israelites were the chosen people of God. Beginning with Abraham to whom God gave a promise to make his descendants a great nation and give them the promise land.¹⁰ Abraham saw the promise land but he never saw his offspring to be multiplied “as the dust of the Earth.”¹¹ Abraham had a son Isaac and he had a son Jacob from whom the twelve tribes of Israel rose. Later descendents of these tribes were enslaved in Egypt under the rule of the Pharaoh. After three hundred and fifty years they were freed by God through Moses and they went on their journey through the desert to the Promise land.

What happened on that journey is the point of interest. Israelites were wondering across the desert for little over forty years and went through hopelessness because of the Egyptian army, hunger, thirst, spiritual decay, unfaithfulness, moments of joy and abundance and in all that they experienced God’s supernatural guidance. God very soon gave Moses the Ten Commandments - the law with which they struggled all the time. After forty years, when Moses was about to die he made a farewell address. In Deuteronomy 30: 15-18 can be read a part of it:

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the

¹⁰ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. Gen 12:6-7 (English Standard Version).

¹¹ I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. Gen 13:16 (English Standard Version).

LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess.¹²

This is important because these exact words were quoted by Winthrop in the closing of his sermon, and he was trying to make the same point as Moses about three thousand years ago. Some interesting parallels can be observed here.

1. Crossing of the Atlantic, which is shown as parallel to the Jordan River which Israelites had to cross.
2. Going into the Promise land. America was the Promise land for Puritans, where they could freely practice their faith without major state restrictions.
3. Warning against seduction to follow other gods, or pleasures and profits. The result is to surely perish out of the good land.
4. Promise of blessing if they would follow God's ways.

Winthrop took a part of the Bible that is useful and almost unbelievably similar to the situation of Puritans and as he uses it, it becomes a national idea. He was not only encouraging or exhorting people. He basically told them that they are special, chosen people just like Israelites. They understood the whole sermon, not just the part about being special. This is the reason why this idea has survived for so long and why it has been recycled over and over. Being special, Gods chosen people, stirs warm feelings in Americans. Historian Douglas McKnight states that this small, but well organized group of "errand" runners, Puritans, created the culture of New England, which later evolved into Yankee and eventually into American culture. Puritans had a strong influence on the intellectual and physical growth of the possible ways of "perceiving and embodying the

¹²Deut 30:15-18 (English Standard Version).

American identity and the sense of sacred/secular historical mission attached to that identity.”¹³

Israelites were an example for Puritans. And Puritans wanted to set an example for the other plantations and to the England itself.¹⁴ There is no doubt about the influence of Puritans on American growth and the sense of the sacred as well as the secular historical mission attached to their identity. The impact of their belief in predestination can be seen in a work by Herman Melville: “We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people – the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. ... God has predestined, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls. The rest of the nations must soon be in our rear. We are the pioneers of the world;”¹⁵ And its results may be seen in understanding the idea of America as the City upon a Hill.

¹³ Douglas McKnight, *Schooling, the Puritan imperative, and the molding of an American national identity: education's "errand into the wilderness"* (New York: Routledge, 2003) ix.

¹⁴ Hanover Historical Text Projects, “John Winthrop: A Modell of Christian charity,” <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html> (accessed April 9, 2011).

¹⁵ Herman Melville, *White Jacket* (Fairford: Echo Library, 2010) 123.

3 MANIFEST DESTINY

In the expression “manifest destiny”, written by journalist John O’Sullivan in 1845, the year before the United States went to war with Mexico over land, there seems to be no mention about the City upon a Hill idea, at least not in these exact words. There is not any speaker whose words could be analyzed in regards motivation. Nonetheless, this term Manifest Destiny is just as important.

3.1 Manifest destiny: different name for the City upon a Hill

The very first occurrence of the term “Manifest Destiny” has not been definitively traced, but people have tried. Julius W. Pratt¹⁶ attempted to trace it. Indisputably John O’Sullivan, newspaper editor, used the term “Manifest Destiny” in 1845 “to describe the essence of this mindset.”¹⁷ By the Manifest Destiny mindset, O’Sullivan tried to explain the expansion westward in which, the original idea of the Puritans can be observed. They wanted America to be a shining beacon, a city upon a hill setting an example for all, not just Massachusetts but the whole world. Just as they were called to do something special in New England, they felt God’s calling to go west to civilize and Christianize the heathen land.

In addition, the term itself contains the word destiny. Destiny can be understood as a given future, planned by something or someone. Recalling Winthrop’s sermon and his mention about Israelites it is obvious that he believed that it was their God given destiny to begin a new society which would stand as an example - the City upon a Hill. Likewise, Nineteenth century Americans believed in a divine obligation of Americans to stretch¹⁸ “from sea to the shining sea.”¹⁹ And for these reasons Manifest destiny is actually just a different name for the City upon a hill idea.

¹⁶ Julius W. Pratt, “The Origin of ‘Manifest Destiny,’” *The American Historical Review* 32, no. 4 (July 1927), 797.

¹⁷ ushistory.org, “Manifest Destiny,” U.S. History Online Textbook, <http://www.ushistory.org/us/29.asp> (accessed March 10, 2011).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Peter Dykema et al., *I Hear America Singing: 55 Songs and Choruses for Community Singing* (Boston: C.C. Birchard & Company, 1917), 5.

3.2 Manifest destiny in painting

In a painting titled “American Progress” John Gast portrays the expansion to the west. Lady Liberty is leading the way, carrying a Bible or textbook, and as she moves the darkness of the heathen land changes into the light of civility and Christianity. She is followed by courageous pioneers who go settle in the west with their families and cattle. The train track is being built at the moment, and it symbolizes the connection of the east and the west. “...For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us”²⁰ Truly the eyes of Europe were upon Americans as they were expanding. In the end, as a result of the efforts of the pioneers, the United States tripled its territory.

3.3 Destiny to acquire the whole western hemisphere

“Here, in the vision of a great and democratic nation, specially favored by Providence, whose “floor shall be a hemisphere”, is the complete idea which was to be so conveniently summed up in the words “manifest destiny.”²¹

In other words Julius W. Pratt understood that America was specially favored by God and his God’s floor shall be a hemisphere. Not just America but hemisphere. This was written about hundred years after Monroe had his seventh annual message to the Congress. This is the reason why America’s sphere of influence moved beyond its natural boundaries and enveloped the entire western hemisphere, as claimed in Monroe Doctrine.²² The Monroe doctrine was written about two decades prior to the term Manifest Destiny first appeared.

3.4 Effect of Manifest Destiny

The use of the term Manifest Destiny consequently had the same affect as when Winthrop used the City upon a Hill idea. It inspired, encouraged and showed that it is not just good to

²⁰ Hanover Historical Text Projects, “John Winthrop: A Modell of Christian charity,” <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html> (accessed April 9, 2011).

²¹ Julius W. Pratt, “The Origin of ‘Manifest Destiny,’ ” *The American Historical Review* 32, no. 4 (July 1927), 797.

²² James Monroe, “The Monroe Doctrine,” (December 2, 1823), <http://www.ushistory.org/documents/monroe.htm> (accessed April 28, 2011).

expand, but that it is God's given destiny. This idea gave Americans passion to fight the darkness.

4 CITY UPON A HILL DURING THE COLD WAR

Since nineteen seventeen there have been moments where the Soviet Union and United States stood in opposition. Sometimes these disagreements were smaller, for example when fighting the Nazis together, and sometimes bigger like in World War I, or later after the end of World War II. The Soviet Union wanted to acquire more land across Europe that did not belong to her, and United States saw it as a threat to liberty and to other American values. America had major involvement in Europe as well. They invested a lot into fighting the Nazis, and they did not want their investment of money and lives to be devalued by another conflict and the occupation of Europe by the Soviet Union. However, no official war was declared between Soviet Union and United States. The fighting happened only in political debates, meetings and through brinkmanship, including threats of nuclear attack. As a result, this period of tension has been called the Cold War.

4.1 Side note on how Americans viewed the Soviet Union

A Second Red Scare started around 1947. After the end of WWII, Americans started to fear Communism more than ever before. The fear increased with new Soviet imperialism, with the beginning of Cold War, and then when Russia got the bomb.²³ During this time people were suspicious. The Second Red Scare resulted in the Soviets being depicted as evil

4.2 City upon a Hill sparkles again

During the Cold War, which is roughly dated from 1947 to 1991, several mentions of the City upon a Hill can be found. Joseph M. McShane says, in his article called “Winthrop’s ‘City Upon a Hill’ in Recent Political Discourse”, that the Winthrop sermon is one of the fundamental texts of American civil religion. One thing that the author of this article is astonished by is the magnetism of this sermon and its message to American politicians and their speechwriters since 1960. Both parties tried to include and profit from the connection with John Winthrop and his vision of America. The writer points out the contrast of using a

²³ Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for identity: America since 1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 64.

document from America's pre-history to recommend themselves to modern voters, and he finds it strange yet understandable.²⁴

During the Cold War, just as before in Manifest Destiny or in Winthrop's sermon, it makes sense to use the idea of the City upon a Hill. The reason is to evoke the feeling of being God's chosen people, the "good guys" who are in the light and have the truth and God who guides them on their side. The City upon a hill idea shows the difference between the uncivilized dark world and the United States. This is the very same reason why Winthrop used this Bible passage in his sermon over three hundred years prior.

4.3 John F. Kennedy and City upon a Hill

John F. Kennedy was elected president of the United States in 1960. Before giving his inaugural speech he spoke as a president-elect in the State House in Boston on January 9, 1961. This speech has later been referred to by some scholars as his City upon a Hill speech.. Kennedy first touched on the idea of beacon lights, that America has served as such for other nations. He goes on and claims that United States does not imitate – "for we are a model to others", Kennedy says. He talks about the difficulty in constructing an administration and in that he relates to Winthrop when he was faced with the same task of building a new government. He uses the idea of City upon a Hill to ask for great effort and perfection from every level of government, national, state and local because "the eyes of all people are upon us."²⁵

The City upon a Hill, as used by Kennedy, has lost its Christian motive, but it has kept every bit of its rhetorical and semantic power. He used the idea because it fit the situation. That Americans must be the light so they are distinct from the dark Soviet Union, and they need to focus on being a model, setting an example, since that is the U.S. destiny. There seems to be no indicator of doing it to spread Christianity as Winthrop suggested. Instead, Kennedy replaced Christianity with democracy and capitalism.

²⁴ Joseph M. McShane, "Winthrop's 'City Upon a Hill' in Recent Political Discourse," *America*, October 1, 1988, 194.

²⁵ John F. Kennedy, "The 'City Upon a Hill' Speech," (January 9, 1961), <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/OYhUZE2Qo0-ogdV7ok900A.aspx> (accessed April 28, 2011).

4.4 Ronald W. Reagan and the City upon a Hill

Ronald Reagan, the fortieth president of the United States and a conservative Republican, is credited with reviving national pride after the hardships of the previous two decades. Reagan was very popular and was elected to a second term in 1984.

4.4.1 Effect of the attempted assassination on Reagan

After surviving an assassination attempt on March 30, 1981, Reagan was sure that God had spared his life for a purpose. Later he had three meetings that affirmed it. First with Terence Cardinal Cooke, who told him that “The hand of God was upon you” after which Reagan said: “I know, I have decided that whatever time I have left is for Him.” A few months later Reagan and his wife were invited to have a meal with Mother Theresa and she told him: “You have suffered the passion of the cross and have received grace. There is a purpose to this. This has happened to you at this time because your country and the world need you.” The last encounter was a year later with Pope John Paul II, who had also survived an assassination attempt around the same time as Reagan.²⁶ In a biography of Pope John Paul II is written: “For the Pope, Reagan had been an instrument in the hands of God”²⁷ The feeling was mutual. Their common goal was to defeat communism.

Consequently it seems that the difficulty in the beginning of Reagan’s presidency only made him a better, more respected and more popular leader. Furthermore, his near-death experience had an effect on his time in the presidential office and his perception of ideas like the City upon a Hill.

4.4.2 Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speech in Dallas

After four years, Ronald Reagan was again nominated to run for president, and his acceptance speech is the first one in which he references the City upon a Hill. He speaks of their courageous beginning four years ago, with a dream of an America that would be “a shining city on a hill”.²⁸

²⁶ Paul Kengor, “Reagan’s Catholic Connections,” Catholic education resource center, http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/catholic_stories/cs0080.html (accessed March 12, 2011).

²⁷ Carl Bernstein, Marco Politi, *His Holiness: John Paul II and the hidden history of our time* (Waterville: Thorndike Press, 1997) 693.

²⁸ Ronald W. Reagan, “Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination,” (August 23, 1984), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=40290#axzz1KqEgrxJg> (accessed April 28, 2011).

As Reagan closes his long and emotionally charged speech he mentions his journey of life, a shining city on a hill, the Olympic Games and stories how the torch has been passed, and the torch of Lady Liberty. All these are very personal to Americans, and the speech is without a doubt meant to reach the bottom of each individual's soul. The way he connects everything at the end of his speech proves the importance of the American identity in relation to the City upon a Hill idea. He uses it to fuel the emotions that the audience is already experiencing. He uses it for the same reason why it had been used in the past: it is familiar and it sounds great in a speech. Although why did he add the word "shining"? He may have been referring to the growth of America during his past four years as president, but for sure he also used it, just as Kennedy did, to show the clear distinction between shining America and dark Soviet Union.

4.4.3 Farewell speech

In his farewell speech to the public on 11 January, 1989, Reagan concludes his eight years of presidency and points out the good and the bad. He Talks about the achieved visions and goals and encourages people to keep up the good work in the future. He points out the importance of understanding American history because "if we forget what we did, we won't know who we are." The tone of the speech is calm, filled with importance, hope for the future and thankfulness for the past. The City upon a Hill idea appears several times during the speech.²⁹

First when Reagan speaks of the lessons that America has learned he says: "once you begin a great movement, there's no telling where it will end. We meant to change a nation, and instead, we changed a world. Countries across the globe are turning to free markets and free speech, and turning away from ideologies of the past."³⁰ Clearly for Reagan,, America is the model, the example, the City upon a Hill. This is the exact thing that Winthrop was saying several hundred years back.

Towards the end of his speech he mentions Winthrop's City upon a Hill again. He starts by pointing at Winthrop and why it is important that he used the idea of the City upon

²⁹ Ronald W. Reagan, "Farewell Address to the Nation," (January 11, 1989), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29650#axzz1KqEgrxJg> (accessed April 28, 2011).

a Hill. Winthrop was a man of freedom in that he escaped England in a vision of freedom. Reagan goes on and explains what he sees, imagines when speaking about the “shining city”. A “tall proud city built on rocks..., wind-swept, God-blessed”. Again Reagan is adding words and creates new links between these characteristics, because the links between City upon a Hill idea which is already known, and the new ideas, make the new concepts acceptable. “And she’s still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the *lost places* who are hurtling through the *darkness*, toward home.”³¹ A useful paraphrase which reveals more familiar ideas could be: “she (America) is still a light and hope, she attracts people who look for freedom from all the lost places where there is darkness to find a home.”

Lastly Reagan closes the speech with these words: “We made the city stronger. We made the city freer, and we left her in good hands.” He exchanges the word America with city, and shows that he sees America as a shining City upon a hill. Secondly, he is aware that the city is stronger than it was before. One reason for it is the economic upturn in which nineteen million new jobs were created and filled. The second reason is that America, after a disastrous seventies marked by Vietnam, Watergate, fuel shortages and the Iran Hostage Crisis, is respected globally once again.³² “The Lord make it like that of New England”.³³ Winthrop in his famous sermon wanted the colony to be respected and be an example, so that people who will build new colonies later would ask God to make their new colony just as the one of New England. Reagan sees the city stronger because it is looked to for leadership, it is an example again. Winthrop perceived it as God’s call to set an example. Reagan saw it as a measuring tool of the city’s strength.

4.4.4 How the idea of a City upon a Hill evolved under Reagan

The evolution of the City upon a Hill idea under Reagan did not regain its Christian motive, even though he was, as he says, a new-born believer. But, the idea certainly kept all of its rhetorical power in four ways of use and meaning.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ronald W. Reagan, “Farewell Address to the Nation,” (January 11, 1989), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29650#axzz1KqEgrxJg> (accessed April 28, 2011).

³² Ibid.

³³ Hanover Historical Text Projects, “John Winthrop: A Modell of Christian charity,” <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html> (accessed April 9, 2011).

A) Differentiation of America from other countries, especially the Soviet Union. B) Use of the City upon a Hill evokes familiarity, that it somehow belongs to or relates strongly to the United States. C) As a tool to encourage people and show that they have to be different and better because they should be the example for all D) It points out that Americans are God's chosen people, just like the ancient Israelites.

4.5 Democratic use of the City upon a hill during Reagan's presidency

Interestingly, both Republicans and Democrats at this time made use of Winthrop's ideas, proving how good the "Modell of Christian charity" and the idea of City upon a Hill were and how deep this concept reaches into the soul of Americans, no matter the aim of the orator.

4.5.1 Mario Cuomo

Mario Cuomo's speech at the Democratic National Convention on July 16, 1984 in San Francisco was the first major reaction to Reagan's presidency with the use of the City upon a Hill idea. Cuomo skillfully points out the problems of the Reagan administration's lack of unity in community, the big difference between the "lucky and the left-out" The deficit was not balanced by 1983, as was promised by Reagan, and the inflation rate which had gone lower, as Reagan promised, was not really due to his efforts, Cuomo said.³⁴

He starts his keynote address by: "Please allow me to skip the stories and the poetry and the temptation to deal in nice but vague rhetoric" and he continues with: "Mr. President you ought to know that this nation is more a "Tale of Two Cities" than it is just a "Shining City on a Hill." The second quotation follows closely on the first, and it is interesting how they do not add up. He claims he does not want to speak vaguely, and then he starts talking about the Tale of Two Cities. Nonetheless, Cuomo goes on to say that Reagan does not really care about everyone: he cares only for the welfare of the state to fulfill the idea of the shining city, but there is another city, left-out, broken, poor where things are happening that the president does not see are does not want to see.³⁵

³⁴ Mario Cuomo, "Democratic National Convention Keynote Address," (July 16, 1984), <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mariocuomo1984dnc.htm> (accessed April 28, 2011).

³⁵ Ibid.

Even though the City upon a Hill idea until this point has been used by very different kinds of people with similar motivation, this appears to be the first time when its use was not beneficial and did not keep the Democrats from losing by a landslide in the presidential election of 1984. So the assumption is that Cuomo's tactic did not work. He tried to use the same weapon as President Reagan and he wanted to use it against Reagan himself, but it did backfire.

4.5.2 Michael S. Dukakis

In Atlanta on July 21, 1988, Michael Dukakis, governor of Massachusetts and Democratic candidate for president gave his acceptance speech called "A New Era of Greatness for America," after his presidential nomination. "Governor Dukakis in his speech focused the Democratic party's attention once more as Cuomo did in 1984 on the ideals contained in the "Modell of Christian Charity." In typical Democratic fashion, moreover, his tone was exhortative rather than celebratory, and he continued Cuomo's line of reasoning."³⁶ Dukakis pointing at Reagan's comments that the American dream will no longer be for the few privileged only, the few that happened to be part of the shining city and not the city of left-outs. He continues with several remarks on behalf of Reagan's presidency and the "strength" of the City upon a Hill, which Dukakis considers to be actually weakness.³⁷ Dukakis does not use the typical phrase of the City upon a hill. It does not appear in his speech at all. Although he uses Winthrop, he refers to the idea of community. A Community in which people love one-another, make others' conditions their own, and are knit together as one. When Winthrop used these words over three hundred years ago he was not talking about money and possession, he was pointing at selfless thinking.³⁸

4.5.3 Summary of Cuomo's and Dukakis' view of the City upon a Hill

The short extract from Cuomo's speech shows that the City upon a Hill idea can have as many different interpretations and uses as people who use it want it to have. Repeatedly, Winthrop turns out to be a great source for public speaking, no matter what is the aim of

³⁶ Joseph M. McShane, "Winthrop's 'City Upon a Hill' in Recent Political Discourse," *America*, October 1, 1988, 194.

³⁷ Michael S. Dukakis, "A New Era of Greatness for America," (July 21, 1988), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=25961#axzz1KqEgrxJg> (accessed April 28, 2011).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

the speaker. The City upon a Hill is a familiar idea. Presidents and politicians have used it before, and it shows national pride in the sovereign election of God and in his blessing to set an example to the rest of the world. Yet the exact steps for reaching the goal are up to the orator to set.

In his speech, Dukakis tries to benefit from the mentioning of Winthrop's name as well, but for his Democratic point of view he uses the reference to the Community rather than the City upon a Hill. Actually he attempts to avoid the City upon a Hill because of its connotation with the well being for a small group of people only, Reagan's Shining City, and not the whole nation.

Something interesting appears in both these speeches: Winthrop himself is an American inspiration. The name itself, no matter which idea is used, makes a great public speaking tool of power and importance.

5 BILL CLINTON

William Jefferson Clinton from Arkansas served as the forty-second president of the United States from 1993 to 2001. Clinton wanted to be president since childhood. When he was sixteen years old, he met John F. Kennedy in the White House and he knew where his life was headed. Bill Clinton won student elections at high school and also at Georgetown University. Later he started to work for Senator William Fulbright. Clinton became the youngest governor in Arkansas history at the age of thirty-two. In 1992, he was positioned as the Democratic nominee for President.³⁹ He as well used the City upon a Hill idea, however with an alteration of the name. The purpose of the changed name was intended to separate it from Reagan's Shining City upon a Hill.

5.1 The New Covenant

The New Covenant was a theme of a series of Clinton speeches from the fall of 1991, which were given at Georgetown University. The first was called "New Covenant: Responsibility and Rebuilding the American Community", the second was called "A New Covenant for Economic Change" and the third was called "A New Covenant for American Security".⁴⁰ Later, Clinton in his State of the Union speech in 1995 explained more what he meant by the New Covenant and where the idea came from. Bill Clinton says: "I call it the New Covenant. But it is grounded in a very, very old idea, that all Americans have not just a right but a solemn responsibility to rise as far as their God-given talents and determination can take them..."⁴¹

5.2 The City upon a Hill evolves into the New Covenant

This "old idea" he is mentioning is no other than the idea of the City upon a Hill. It is America's God given responsibility to rise and to prosper. It is the same concept that John Winthrop preached about in his sermon, on the transatlantic boat, when he talked about the

³⁹University of Virginia, "American President an Online Reference Resource," University of Virginia, <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/clinton/essays/biography/1>, (accessed April 27, 2011).

⁴⁰Bill Clinton, "The New Covenant: Responsibility and Rebuilding the American Community," (October 23, 1991), http://www.dlc.org/ndol_ci.cfm?kaid=128&subid=174&contentid=2783 (accessed April 27, 2011).

⁴¹ Bill Clinton, "State of the Union Address," (January 24, 1995), <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/P/bc42/speeches/sud95wjc.htm> (accessed April 28, 2011).

Israelites and their task in the Promise Land. The interesting thing is that Clinton uses the new name, but he also says that it is a very old idea. Clinton's way of connecting old and new information, most likely to gain the trust of his audience and slowly introduce a new concept, can be seen in many of his presidential addresses.

The City upon a Hill, or rather The New Covenant, works for yet another president as a serviceable public speech tool, which intensifies the information by adding something traditional and tested by time. Repeatedly, the connection of old and new can be seen just as well as the evolution of the form while the meaning stays almost the same. The City upon a Hill and Manifest Destiny relate in a very similar way to Clinton's New Covenant.

6 GEORGE W. BUSH

By 1997, there was little doubt about Bush's ambition to run for president.⁴² In fact, he saw it as God's calling. Bush was truly a faith-based president, not just because he said "God bless America" in his speeches, as people expected him to do, but because God, his faith in him, and his belief in God's guidance are the elements of his speeches and sometimes the center of his argument. He was referred to as "exclusionary" in his faith, but his faith does not exclude; what makes it different is that it is personal and practiced.⁴³ An article was published in *USA Today* on October 24, 2004 with the title: "When Religion and Politics Mix", in which the author skillfully shows three different types of this "mixing" by picking presidents as examples. First is called "Caesar and God remain separate", second "Caesar and God are sometimes partners" and third "Caesar and God regularly collaborate." President Bush was used as an example of the third group. He acknowledged Jesus as his favorite political philosopher, and he explained that his principles in public policy were derived from his faith. The author speculates if Bush's relationship with God and frequent reference to the Bible in his speeches is not the reason why he became a president, since a recent Gallup poll points to a high percentage of Americans who believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems.⁴⁴

⁴² Alexander Moens, *The foreign policy of George W. Bush: values, strategy and loyalty* (Surrey UK: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2004) 23.

⁴³ Alexander Moens, *The foreign policy of George W. Bush: values, strategy and loyalty* (Surrey UK: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2004) 209.

⁴⁴ Gerald L. Zelizer, "When religion and politics mix," *USA today*, http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/2004-10-24-religion-politics_x.htm (accessed March 22, 2011).

6.1 The City upon a Hill after 9/11

The inauguration of George W. Bush took place on January 20, 2001. Just eight months later, he had to face the biggest attack on America's people and their liberty. This moment shook the nation but not its beliefs. In times of distress, Americans have historically turned to God or at least some "higher power". Bush being a Christian leader, his speech on September 20, 2001, directed all eyes of all towards God and imbued the City upon a Hill with Christianity once again.⁴⁵

Winthrop's sermon is a deep well which springs with inspiration on how to govern people under God's providence and protection, no matter the situation. Bush not once mentioned the City upon a Hill, but touched on the ideas of the City upon a Hill perfectly. Bush says: "We have seen the unfurling of flags, the lightning of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers, in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. We have seen the decency of a loving and giving people who have made the grief of strangers their own."⁴⁶ Bush's words are mirrored from Winthrop's words: "We must delight in each other, make other's conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our Commission and Community in the work, our Community as members of the same body, so shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."⁴⁷ Bush then closed his speech with a promise to win, and in doing so Bush asks for God's wisdom and His watch over the United States of America.⁴⁸ Winthrop closes his speech with similar words: "The Lord will [then] be our God and delight to dwell among us, as His own people and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of his wisdom, power, goodness, and truth than formerly we have been acquainted with."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation," (September 20, 2001), <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911addresstothetation.htm> (accessed April 28, 2011).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Hanover Historical Text Projects, "John Winthrop: A Modell of Christian charity," <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html> (accessed April 9, 2011).

⁴⁸ George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation," (September 20, 2001), <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911addresstothetation.htm> (accessed April 28, 2011).

⁴⁹ Hanover Historical Text Projects, "John Winthrop: A Modell of Christian charity," <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html> (accessed April 9, 2011).

A year after September 11, 2001, President Bush gave his September 11 Anniversary Address in New York, and he continued on the same Winthrop - Christian principles. In closing his address Bush talked about the hope for freedom guarded by peace for all mankind, not just America, and he says: “That hope still lights our way. “And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness will not overcome it.”⁵⁰ Light brings hope to situations, especially to one like the horrors of 9/11, where the vision of the future in which the light will overcome the darkness is the source of strength. Bush used the darkness and light verse from the Bible as many American leaders did before to make themselves distinct from the darkness – the bad ones- and to show that they are in the light, set apart by God’s choice.

⁵⁰ George W. Bush, “September 11 Anniversary Address,” (September 11, 2002), <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.11.02.html> (accessed April 28, 2011); John 1:5 quoted in George W. Bush, “September 11 Anniversary Address” (September 11, 2002).

7 THE LIGHT BREAKS FROM POLITICS

Many times in many ways, light was a recurring symbol in this thesis. It began in the introduction with the light in the dark effect and continued with all sorts and kinds of uses by different people but always in connection to the City upon a Hill idea. In the Bible Matthew 5:14 documents Jesus' words and right before he talks about a city that is set on a hill he says to his audience that they are the light of the world.⁵¹

The meaning of the light is simply an example, and this can be observed from the context of the Gospel of Matthew, whereas the origin of the light, of the example, is something different. Puritans were Christian based people with high stress on education and by that they had the knowledge of how to set an example, be the light.⁵² The Bible says: "In him [Jesus] was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."⁵³ Meaning, as Jesus gave an example of how to live their lives to them; they should be the example to other people.

Today the American light is dimmed. The word light is still used in the same exemplary way, but Jesus' life example is pushed out. One could argue that it is because Jesus is no more valid for these post-modern days because the whole story is millenia old. On the other hand some, like former president George W. Bush, still cherish and count on this first example of light and try and have tried to include it in their life and even in the governing of the United States of America so that it can truly be the example, the light, the City upon a Hill set before the entire world to see.

⁵¹ Mt 5:14 (King James Version).

⁵² Douglas McKnight, *Schooling, the Puritan imperative, and the molding of an American national identity: education's "errand into the wilderness"* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 15.

⁵³ John 1:4-5 (English Standard Version).

8 BARACK OBAMA

Born to a white woman and a black man, grow up without a father and moving around a lot,, young Barack Obama had a difficult childhood, but that did not stop him; it stimulated him to reach higher.⁵⁴

8.1 The house upon a rock – is Obama dismantling the city?

President Obama on April 14, 2009 at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. gave a speech on the economy. He wanted to explain some of the basic goals for his presidency. In a fairly economic speech, he used a Biblical story from the end of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. It talks about two men one that built his house on the sand and other on the rock. Later rain fell, the floods came and the wind blew and beat on the houses. The house on the sand did not stand the disaster, but the one on the rock stood still.⁵⁵ Obama in his speech says: "We cannot rebuild this economy on the same pile of sand. We must build our house upon a rock. We must lay a new foundation for growth and prosperity – a foundation that will move us from an era of borrow and spend to one where we save and invest."⁵⁶

Obama is trying to avoid the "same old story" of the City upon a hill, but on the other hand cannot resist Jesus' teaching. It is similar as with the Manifest destiny, when different title was used for the same thing. Very interestingly the City upon a Hill idea and idea of the two houses is from the same sermon of Jesus. One is from the beginning and the other from the closing part. It can be assumed that Obama was trying to avoid the City upon a Hill because of its relation to Reagan and Bush. Nevertheless he wanted to stress the same thing, but instead he used different but still similar picture of the "house upon a rock." President Obama used Biblical text to exhort people, just as other presidents before him. The Scripture seems to be known well enough so that it can be used as intensifier of what is said, and once again it shows how American rhetoric is done. The fact that president Obama talks about the house upon a rock and not the city upon a hill does not have to necessarily mean that President Obama is taking down the City from the Hill and

⁵⁴ Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of Barack Obama* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc, 2008) xiii – xvi.

⁵⁵ Mt 7:24-27 (English Standard Version).

⁵⁶ Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on the Economy," (April 14, 2009), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-economy-georgetown-university> (accessed April 28, 2011).

sets it “only” upon a rock. Even though some would say so, pointing at his bowing before Saudi Arabia King, but there seems to be no other evidence.⁵⁷

Obama is not trying to take the City down from the Hill rather he wants it to be built on a Democratic “Rock” and not on Republican “Sand”. A clear distinction can be seen when Obama says: “on the same pile of sand”, which was Republican “sand”. It is a masterful use of the Bible passage, word play and twist in meaning which creates a whole new “City upon a Hill” that fits the need of Democratic Barack Obama and casts a shadow on its former orators.

8.2 The future of President Obama and the City upon a Hill

It is not the lack of Christianity that might cost President Obama his reelection in the future, but rather it is the lack of kept promises. Guantanamo bay is still opened, there are mixed results on nuclear arms reduction treaty with the Russians and the reduction plan of the national debt has failed miserably.⁵⁸ According to a Gallup poll, Obama’s job approval rating has been on the decline since August 2009, with only about 45% of respondents approving of his performance.⁵⁹

The City upon a Hill seems to be fading away as well at least for the time being, and it is substituted with the House upon a Rock. Worries about the future of this concept are on the other hand exaggerated, because four years without the City upon a Hill have happened before and the idea is still, after more than 300 years, alive. The projection for the future, based on history, is that with a new election coming up, the term City upon a Hill can be expected again. Bets could be made that later Obama’s “House upon a Rock” will be ridiculed and pointed to as weak, as a rule of a president who bows down, and thus is in the eyes of Americans, unsuccessful.

⁵⁷ Cathrine Herridge, “Obama’s Apparent Bow to Saudi King Outrages Conservatives”, FOXNews.com, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/04/10/obamas-apparent-bow-saudi-king-outrages-conservatives/> (accessed March 22, 2011).

⁵⁸ Juliet Eilperin, Michael A. Fletcher, “Obama’s Key Promises: Track the status of the President’s campaign promises”, The Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/obamas-promises/> (accessed April 27, 2011).

⁵⁹ Gallup, Inc., “Gallup Daily: Obama Job approval“, Gallup, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/113980/gallup-daily-obama-job-approval.aspx> (accessed April 27, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Jesus wanted to bring glory to the Father God. Winthrop wanted to encourage his fellow travelers. Manifest Destiny reminded Americans of their responsibility. The City upon a Hill during the Cold war played a role in distinguishing who are “the bad guys and who are the good guys” – the light, beams of light and the shining City upon a Hill. Both Democrats and Republicans used the idea of the City upon a Hill to reach their goals: Republicans to build the Shining City upon a Hill as a nation and Democrats to build an equal nation where there are not two cities – the city of lucky and the city of left-outs.

Every aspect of this thesis is connected with what can be called the American identity. The City upon a hill includes setting an example and freedom because that is what Puritans were going for when escaping Britain. They were sure they were God’s chosen people sent on an errand into the wilderness to civilize and sanctify the land called America. They expected blessing from God if they would go by his rules just as was promised to the Israelites. The City upon a Hill idea is a great public speaking tool, because it brings emotions and the feeling of familiarity, importance and supernatural selection to the main topic.

The City upon a Hill idea is familiar to Americans, but not many know the exact meaning, and that is why politicians in particular like to add it into their speeches, because the interpretation can be altered by the orator.

A big part of the American presidential style is communication with the nation – addresses to the nation. It is a similar style as preaching a sermon, possibly after the example of John Winthrop. A sermon is a style that is used to wake people up, exhort them to action and call them to repentance. Influencing people by spoken word is what seems to work for Americans. American presidents are since the 1960s chosen a lot based on how well they do in presidential debates, because for Americans it is important how well their president can communicate his ideas, how well he can “preach” a sermon and by it affect the people of America.

The evolution of the City upon a Hill idea is double-edged. In its meaning the evolution during the past 380 years is quite clear. Many chapters in this bachelor’s thesis document how the understanding and the use of the City upon a Hill idea has been evolving as was fit to the situation and to the orator. Some speakers added to it, some

exchanged it for a similar concept and some did not use the term itself at all, but only used the idea which it represents. Nonetheless the form, and the name of the City upon a Hill, what ever the meaning or understanding may be, has been kept all the way from Jesus' first use in the Sermon on a Mount, through the first use in a connection with America by John Winthrop all the way to George W. Bush.

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