



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 18, 2012

Some Santorum Supporters Show Interest in Ron Paul

“The evangelical community began reaching out to Paul almost immediately after Sen. Rick Santorum dropped out of the presidential race,” wrote Wead, citing [USA Christian Ministries](#), a somewhat obscure ultra-fundamentalist group, whose spokesman, Steven Andrew, announced in an April 11 [press release](#): “After Santorum, then Ron Paul is the most God-fearing presidential candidate that the Republican party should endorse.” Andrew advised that “if Republicans don’t give a Christian candidate, Christians should look elsewhere — even to a third party.” He went so far as to declare that “Obama and Romney are the wrong direction for the USA. They serve another Jesus. Romney and Obama aren’t Christians even though they want us to believe they are.”



Wead anonymously quoted another evangelical, a “prominent television evangelist,” who told him that there was great disappointment in the evangelical camp when Santorum withdrew — even though his campaign looked to be fading by the day. “No one faults a man for being a good father, and dropping out to take care of a child,” the evangelist said, “but it hurts many of us very deeply. We were counting on him to lead our cause.”

As reported by [The New American](#), in January a confab of self-appointed evangelical leaders specially selected Santorum as the “consensus” Christian candidate to bear their brand of conservatism into the Republican primary. One of those leaders, Gary Bauer of the group [American Values](#), said that Santorum was gaining on frontrunner Romney, and his evangelical group was trying “to make sure that conservative values, the sort of Reagan conservatism, continues to dominate in the Republican Party.”

The [Family Research Council’s](#) Tony Perkins, who appeared to be a key figure in anointing Santorum the Christian choice for President, claimed that the former Pennsylvania Senator “has consistently articulated the issues that are of concern to conservatives, both the economic and the social, and has woven those into a very solid platform. And he has a record of stability.... He’s reliable.”

While many erstwhile big-money Santorum supporters, such as Wyoming businessman [Foster Friess](#), have passively turned their support to Romney, wrote Wead, “many seeking an end to the corruption in Washington see Ron Paul, a born again Christian, as their best voice of protest and the best way to force Romney to deal with them” — apparently meaning they want Romney to consider Ron Paul as a running mate.

Steve Scheffler, president of the [Iowa Faith and Freedom Coalition](#) and a member of the GOP national committee, told Wead that Romney’s campaign needs to wake up soon to the need for those evangelicals swinging to Ron Paul. “The presidential race is likely to be truly competitive ... in about a



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dozen states,” he said, “and the Republicans will need to motivate people to volunteer at calling centers and put up signs. I don’t think there’s much room for error.”

Wead quoted Brian Jacobs, a former consultant to such evangelical leaders as Billy Graham and Kenneth Copeland, as noting that “Ron Paul is a born again Christian who is untainted by this corruption that has engulfed Washington. It should be no big surprise that evangelicals are discovering him.”

Meanwhile, a majority of mainline conservative evangelicals appear willing to settle for Romney — notwithstanding his Mormon pedigree and less-than-stellar record on the issues. “Overall, around two-thirds of evangelical voters are expected to vote Romney in the general election,” reported [Christianity Today](#), a conservative evangelical magazine. “In a head to head between Romney and President Obama, 72 percent of evangelicals would vote for Romney, compared to 25 percent who would vote for Obama, according to Pew. Just 21 percent of evangelicals approve of Obama, compared to 51 percent of Americans.”

Richard Land of the Southern Baptist [Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission](#), told [NPR](#) that the average evangelical will vote for Romney simply to get Obama out of office. “I think that people have to understand that being for Rick Santorum does not necessarily mean you’re anti-Romney,” Land said, adding that “against Barack Obama it will not be very difficult at all for Mr. Romney to garner the support of both the evangelicals, unless he were to do something catastrophic, like pick a pro-choice running mate, which I don’t think he’s going to do.”

With his own candidate dropping out, Gary Bauer said he also was ready to settle for Romney, but with a caveat. “Going to the general election, I will do everything I can for Governor Romney,” Bauer told the [New York Times](#). “But his campaign has got to make it easy for me to help them, and not make it hard by being tempted to pull back on conservative issues.”

Similarly, Tony Perkins said he would sidle up to Romney, but warned that the former Massachusetts Governor would have to “demonstrate a genuine and solid commitment to the core values issues.” Perkins told the *Times* that “intensity is going to be a big problem for Mitt Romney,” unlike Santorum, who had “passionately articulated the connection between America’s financial greatness and its moral and cultural wholeness.”

Even as most political observers declared the GOP nomination sewn up by Romney, Ron Paul continued his campaign, with the Texas Congressman saying in a private meeting with evangelical leaders in Ft. Worth that as President he would favor moving the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem — a shift that would directly challenge the UN’s insistence that no embassies reside in Israel’s official capital because of the ongoing conflict with the Palestinians.

According to [BusinessInsider.com](#), the evangelical leaders “started off the meeting by asking Paul whether he would sign an Executive Order to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a major policy objective for Israeli hardliners and many leaders in the Christian Right.” Rep, Paul responded by saying that “the real issue here is not what America wants, but what does Israel want. If Israel wants their capital to be Jerusalem, then the United States should honor that.” Added the conservative candidate, “How would we like it if some other nation said, ‘We decided to recognize New York City as your capital instead [of Washington D.C.], so we will build our embassy there?’”

Doug Wead said that while the response surprised some evangelicals who have bought into the false notion (pushed by such Christian leaders as [Gary Bauer](#)) that Paul is anti-Israel, the response “makes



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sense” given the Congressman’s longtime support of Israel’s right to exist.

It continues to be puzzling to many conservative Christians that self-styled evangelical leaders such as Gary Bauer, Tony Perkins, and Richard Land are content to ignore the solidly conservative and Christian Ron Paul in favor of Romney, a mediocre candidate (at best) whose political positions over the years have been at odds with conventional conservative values — not to mention his Mormon heritage.

By contrast, while Paul has studiously avoided making faith an issue, he has unabashedly declared, “I have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, and I endeavor every day to follow Him in all I do and in every position I advocate.”

BusinessInsider.com noted that while Ron Paul will unlikely be able to turn the tide of the Republican nomination, his outreach to evangelicals reluctant to embrace Romney could give him “more leverage within the party, as Romney tries to unite the GOP after this year’s divisive primary fight. It could also help broaden the Paul coalition, setting the stage for a future run by Paul’s son, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul.”

Photo of Ron Paul: AP Images



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