

THE DEMOCRATIC RUNNING MATE

## Lieberman Cites Religion as Foundation of Environmentalism

By RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA

WAUSAU, Wis., Oct. 18 — Once again citing religion as a foundation for policy, Senator Joseph I. Lieberman said today that he and Vice President Al Gore would be good stewards of nature, while Gov. George W. Bush would spoil it.

"For Al Gore and me, this begins, if you will, by our faith," Mr. Lieberman told more than 1,000 people in a park here. "If you believe in God, I think it's hard not to be an environmentalist, because you see the environment as the work of God."

Mr. Lieberman referred to the biblical story of the Garden of Eden, where "it said that God put Adam and Eve there to work the garden, but also to guard it."

With a lake as a backdrop, Mr. Lieberman spoke of a long list of environmental successes over the last generation and the role Mr. Gore has played in many of them. And he attacked Mr. Bush's environmental record in Texas, a regular theme of

his speeches.

"When it comes to the environment and so much else, do we want to keep moving forward, or are we going to move backward?" Mr. Lieberman asked. "The record makes clear that George Bush and Dick Cheney will take America backwards."

He noted that Texas has the highest rate of toxic industrial air emissions of any state, the worst smog, and the third-highest rate of toxic water emissions. "Given the chance to stand with people, families, or side with the polluters, Governor Bush has too often chosen to side with the polluters," Mr. Lieberman said.

The Bush campaign has noted, in response to such criticism, that Texas' environmental problems predate the governor, and has argued that he is making headway on them. Environmental groups say that Mr. Bush's record on the issue is weak, and that he had little to do with the advances that Texas has made.

The speech today marked the sec-

ond time this week that Mr. Lieberman, the first Jew nominated for national office by a major party, cited religion as a basis for a part of his ticket's platform. On Monday, he said that providing health care to older Americans was "an expression of the basic idea that's true to all religions and all groups, which is to honor our fathers and our mothers."

In August, speaking in a Detroit church, he called for a greater role for religion in public life, and seemed to suggest that morality could not exist without religion. Those remarks made some in his party, and many Jews, uncomfortable, and he insisted afterward that he had not meant to say that people lacking religious beliefs were immoral.

Over the next six weeks of campaigning, Mr. Lieberman spoke far less about religion, but his statements this week seem to signal a return to the themes of that Detroit address. They might also be seen as contradicting his assertion that his

religious beliefs do not determine his policy positions, a distinction that he and his aides have said sets him apart from conservative Christians.

And Mr. Lieberman's statement that belief in God should lead to environmentalism could be taken as a dig at Mr. Bush, who is avowedly religious, but who the senator and other Democrats say is no friend of the environment.

This week, Mr. Lieberman has repeatedly presented his and Mr. Gore's policies as a broad vision growing out of basic values.

"We started out with the values," that led to the creation of environmental laws, he said today.

"Those laws gave birth to a broadly held ethic among people in this country," he continued. "That they accepted their responsibility without the pressure of law to preserve the great natural environment and protect themselves from damage to their health and well-being from environmental pollution."