

# Reed has no fear of GOP schism

## Says party owes Buchanan thanks

By Joyce Price.  
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Christian Coalition Executive Director Ralph Reed disagrees with those who predict that Pat Buchanan will tear the Republican Party apart.

"No matter how the chips fall, the Republican Party is going to be thanking Pat Buchanan for energizing pro-life and pro-family activists as no one else has ever done," Mr. Reed said yesterday on CNN's "Evans & Novak."

He recalled predictions that Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson "was going to blow the party up" when he ran as a Republican candidate for president in 1988.

"When Pat Robertson was running, he was scaring the establishment, and he was shaking up the party and bringing hundreds of thousands and even millions of people into this process and into the party," said Mr. Reed.

In the end, the GOP was helped significantly by Mr. Robertson's efforts, Mr. Reed said.

"As Garry Wills accurately reported in a Time Magazine essay after the election, it was the adoption of Robertson's themes and his supporters by George Bush that made that landslide [over Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis] possible," Mr. Reed said.

Despite the early turmoil in the Republican presidential campaign, Mr. Reed said he does not anticipate an open convention where no candidate has captured the 996 delegates needed to win the nomination.

More and more Republicans are discussing the possibility of an open convention, and in that context debating whether an outsider such as retired Army Gen. Colin Powell or former Rep. Jack Kemp should seek the nomination at the last minute.



Ralph Reed is pleased with the emphasis Pat Buchanan has given the Christian Coalition's favorite issues.

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— Christian Coalition leader Ralph Reed

"I think if the Republican Party were to make the mistake of having someone—and I don't want to particularize it to Colin Powell—to give its nomination to somebody who hasn't been in the process, hasn't been out there running, hasn't been actively seeking the voters," Mr. Reed said. "I think it would be a serious mistake. And I think a lot of pro-family voters would just simply not support the ticket, not go out and work for it. I think it'd be a terrible mistake."

Several prominent Republicans have warned the party will split if Mr. Buchanan wins the nomination. Those who have so warned include William Bennett, the former education secretary who is now co-director of Empower America; William Kristol, editor of the Weekly Standard; and syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer.

These and other critics of Mr. Buchanan have said Mr. Buchanan's nomination would ensure President Clinton's re-election in November.

The biggest concerns the Republican establishment has about Mr. Buchanan are his protectionist trade proposals and criticism of corporate leaders who he says are responsible for massive layoffs.

But Mr. Reed said he does not believe global trade or the soundness of the national economy will be top campaign issues in the remaining primaries or the national presidential campaign.

"I believe the cultural and the moral and the pro-family agenda is going to be decisive in 1996," Mr. Reed said. "If you look at the exit polling data out of New Hampshire, you'll find that only about 11 percent of all voters, about 9 percent of Pat Buchanan voters, listed

trade as important in the outcome of their voting decision."

Meanwhile, Mr. Reed said, "everybody" in the Republican field and even Mr. Clinton have shown more interest in "the kind of issues we've been talking about... the coarsening of the culture, the destruction of our children, the breakup of the family, a poverty of values."

Mr. Reed once again denied recurring reports that he's privately supporting Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole's campaign.

"I don't have an opinion on who ought to be the Republican nominee, and I don't think it's appropriate for me to have one," Mr. Reed said. Federal law prohibits the Christian Coalition, which has a membership of about 1.7 million, from endorsing any candidate for federal office or mobilizing partisan get-out-the-vote drives without losing its tax-exempt status.

"There is a continuum of views in the Christian community," Mr. Reed said. "More pragmatic Christians, who say the most important thing is to win in November, seem to be gravitating towards Dole. Others who say, 'Let's vote our hearts,' are voting for Buchanan. Each position is perfectly legitimate."