

Huckabee dividing evangelicals

by UPI

WASHINGTON - The evangelical nature and populist stance of former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee's presidential bid is dividing the Christian conservative movement. Huckabee is the only evangelical candidate in the presidential race, but rather than uniting Christian conservatives, his presidential bid is dividing the movement's top leaders from its youthful base over his populist economic platform and criticism of President George Bush's foreign policy, The New York Times said Sunday. The evangelical base contributed largely to Huckabee's victory in the Iowa caucuses Jan. 3 and may place him among the front-runners in Michigan's Republican primary Tuesday and South Carolina's Republican primary Saturday. Huckabee's unique platform may attract independent voters and also challenge the old-guards of the Christian conservative political movement, the newspaper said. Some Christian leaders, however, say sidelining some of the movement's most prominent voices, including James Dobson of the conservative Family Research Council, may doom his campaign. Huckabee's rise may be the sign of developments within the evangelical base as well, the Times said. A column in the conservative Catholic Online said Huckabee's campaign signals "the fall of the old 'religious right' and the emergence of a true populist movement which crosses the old, tired lines and labels."

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