NATIONAL

Christian Coalition launches Catholic spinoff

By Charles M. Sennott Boston Globe

BOSTON - They were waiting last night for the coming of Ralph Reed, the head of the Christian Coalition, which wants to bring Catholics into the fold of the largely Protestant, evangelical right through a new spinoff called the Catholic Alliance.

With the snow falling outside and the packed ballroom at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel growing anxious, the moderator suggested that a "moment of silent prayer" might be

While the crowd of 400 bowed their heads in prayer for the safe arrival of Reed, he stood outside in the foyer, beaming like a choirboy for photographers and chatting with U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde, R-III. The Christian Coalition, founded by Pat Robertson, the evangelical broad-Robertson, the evangencia broad-caster, chose predominantly Catho-lic Boston to kick off the first in a series of gatherings nationwide aimed at launching the coalition's "wholly owned subsidiary," as Reed refers to the Catholic Aliance.

The alliance, which has no con-nection to the Roman Catholic Church, was formed this fall to enlist Catholics in the religious right's opposition to abortion and gay rights.

Catholics and evangelical Protestants could find common ground, Reed said, in opposing abortion and pornography, and supporting school choice and the belief that "the family is the most important unit in society

But it remains unclear how a conservative political lobby rooted in the South and struggling to shed an image as white zealots led by divisive televangelists will be received in a largely ethnic population in the Northeast, confirmed in its cultural identity as Catholic and

historically Democratic.

Although the Catholic Church has taken no official position on the Christian Coalition's new division for Catholics, many Catholic lead-ers criticized the Coalition, stressing that its political stands were radically opposed to the policies of the U.S. Catholic Conference, which calls for compassion for the poor and new immigrants, and strong

Immigrant community of Latinos emerging

HISPANIC FROM PAGE A-21

There is a limit here on the number of jobs for unskilled, non-English-speaking workers, Mendo-za says. "This isn't Chicago, where you have huge enterprises looking for labor.'

Apart from the restaurants, apple orchards and pumpkin farms that are the major employers of Latinos here, work is scarce, says Kenneth Rodriguez, founder and chairman of the newly formed Pittsburgh Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

He believes more Latinos come not for itinerant work, but to go to school or for a specific job; to marry someone already living here; or to start a business. Where only a few years ago there were only a couple of Latin-owned-and-operated restaurants, there are now 16 in the Pittsburgh area, he says. There are more than 1,000 businesses owned or controlled by Hispanics in the metropolitan area.

Whatever the source of population growth, there are indications that business providers and services are taking note. The downtown Greyhound bus station began putting its signs in Spanish a couple of years ago.

Phone directories in the area have a few listings for lawyers specializing in immigration. Talent agencies are scrounging for Latinolooking models. Giant Eagle, USAir and other large corporations have joined the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, apparently foreseeing a greater Hispanic presence in this

Seated in the bar, the young man, who is from a small town north of Mexico City, says he misses his home, "but there is nothing for me

"That is my home, but now Pittsburgh is my home, too."

Lillian Thomas is a free-lance

writer living in Pittsburgh.

SEARS correction notice

On page 7 of the Sears 16 page insert on Sunday, December 10, we incorrectly advertised kids coverups as a "Perfect Wrap for after Bath." These character beach coverups are intended for outdoor use and not intended for bath use or sleepwear and are not flame retardant.

opposition to the death penalty. Reed stressed the political power that could result from a merger of

conservative Catholics and evangelical Protestants: "America's 58 million Roman Catholics are now the swing votes in American politics. And whoever wins that vote will be able to govern American for the rest of this century and into the next

Despite the sizable crowd in the chandeliered ballroom, not all of those who paid \$25 to attend were Catholic, Mike Russell, national director of "media planning" for the Virginia-based Christian Coalition, said, "There's no litmus test at the door, so we don't know. But I would

say certainly the majority."
Frank Flynn, a Peabody Republican ward chairman and a Catholic, disagreed. "I would say between 30 and 50 percent, at best," he said.

"These are not exactly the faces' that you see at Mass on Sunday, if you know what I mean.

Sister Mary Carol Bennett, of an Interfaith Alliance chapter in Pennsylvania, said, "Their message is divisive and exclusive. It is solely for political purposes. That is why we, as Catholics, have to speak out against this misuse of religion."

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