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Fundamentalist priests are inducted into the reactionary Roman Catholic splinter group Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), known for its fondness for the Latin rite Mass and the French neofascist National Front Party. Pope Benedict's outreach to SSPX is part of an embrace of the Catholic far Right that bodes ill for political liberals in the Church.

PROFILE

Janice Shaw Crouse

A Warrior with Words

By Pam Chamberlain

Exactly two months before abortion provider George Tiller was assassinated in the foyer of his church in Wichita, Kansas, Janice Shaw Crouse lent her voice to the chorus of pundits criticizing Tiller's unwavering support for women who sought his services. In a column published by the right-wing site *Town Hall*, Crouse is unsparring in denouncing not only Tiller for his "barbaric slaughter," but also the women who use his services.

So Tiller takes upon himself the role of God and condemns to death any innocent child whose mother chooses to label it "unwanted." Then he executes them.¹

To Crouse, both doctor and patient are murderers, both stepped outside their special roles as healer and nurturer, and both deserve to be attacked. The harsh column is quintessential Crouse: she chooses her words carefully, but not cautiously.

Janice Shaw Crouse continues on page 9

The Politics of Schism in the Catholic Church

By Frank L. Coccozzelli

I heard recently from one of my regular readers (I'll call her "Kathy") who shared her concerns about the future of our shared faith. Like me, she is a Roman Catholic with liberal religious and political inclinations. And, like me, she was distressed by several

recent major events in the Church: the Ryan Report documenting generations of sexual abuse by the clergy in Ireland, the hostility expressed by several American bishops towards Notre Dame University for invit-

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— EDITORIAL —

Do we need a new theory of propaganda? The Hard Right seized center stage in August as right-wing pundits and corporate-funded outfits like Americans for Prosperity stepped into the vacuum created by a health care proposal still-in-the-making, sowing misinformation and providing direction for an angry splinter of America.

How can 47 percent of Republicans believe President Obama was born in Kenya? Do 26 percent of the Party really believe that the Obama administration wants to promote euthanasia of the elderly with “death panels”?

Conservative strategists feed their nuggets of lies into well-funded advocacy groups and the large Christian and right-wing media that serve as conveyor belts of false ideas. Currents of belief and distrust powering the Christian Right and the Hard Right make those lies seem real and plausible. Then we hear the sincere cries from the heartland, “Defend the Republic! We the people are being abandoned by the elites.”

Of course, as political scientist Larry M. Bartels (among others) has shown, working class and middle class Americans were indeed abandoned for decades by politicians who ignored their desire for a higher minimum wage and more accessible health care, and silently stood by as the labor movement withered. This remained true even as Democrats won a growing share of votes from lower income whites over the past decades. President Obama’s retreat in the face of insurance lobbyists is only the latest stark example of how even the major party that purports to champion the interests of the working poor and middle class can fail them.

But we don’t need a new theory of propaganda. We can learn from political scientist Jean Hardisty’s analysis of how conservative strategists got busy “mobilizing resentment” during the Clinton years. In this formula, seasoned political strategists mix legitimate class resentments with bigotry and anti-elitism to produce what PRA senior analyst Chip Berlet calls “a toxic stew of conspiracism and scapegoating.” We see this not only among the “birthers” who believe the president is foreign-born, but in the health care protestor who scrawled a swastika over the name of the African-American Congressman David Scott of Georgia.

You see the right-wing populist formula all the time in corporate public relations, belt-

Editorial continues on page 24



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Tarso Luís Ramos

Editor

Abby Scher, Ph.D

Design/layout

Hird Graphic Design

Printing

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The More Things Change

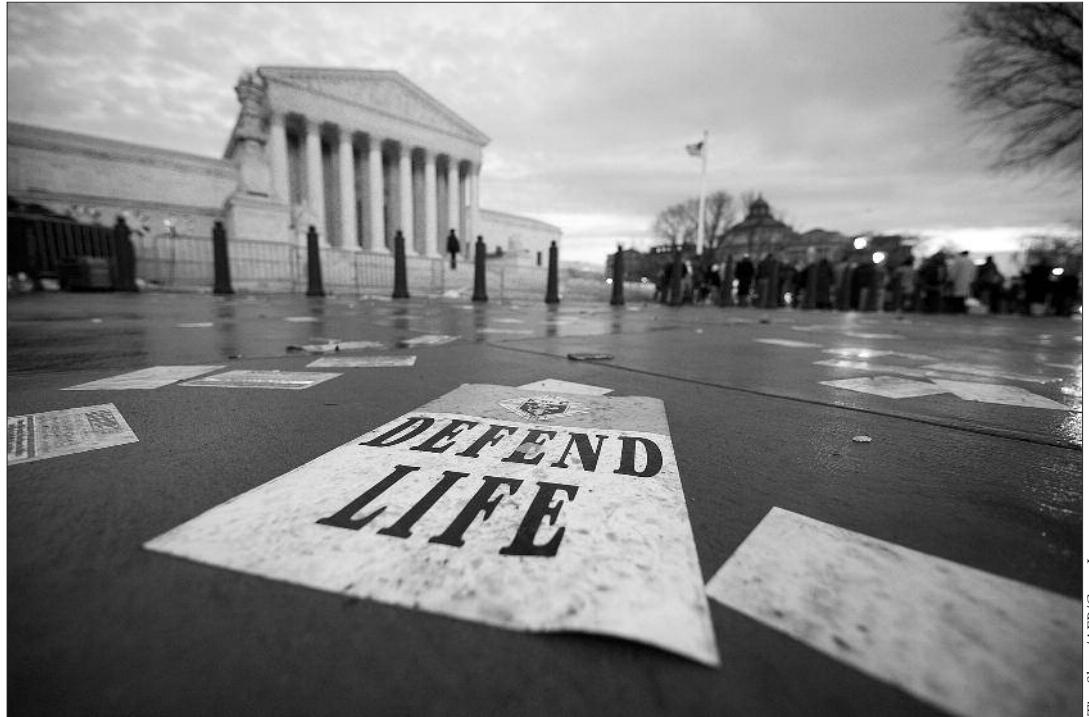
Continuing Threats to Reproductive Freedom

By Pam Chamberlain

In the run-up to the August 2009 Congressional recess, TV ads on health care reform hit the airwaves. The Family Research Council's political action committee launched a five-state effort to squash a comprehensive health care bill with their spot, set in the future after a liberal version of health care reform has passed. The ad features an elderly couple clearly upset that insurance will not pay for the husband's needed surgery. The man complains that the federal government funds Planned Parenthood, forcing taxpayers to pay for abortions but not for his operation. An announcer warns: "Our greatest generation, denied care; our future generation, denied life. Stop the government takeover of health care."¹

As the Obama-created summer 2009 deadline for a version of health care reform legislation drew close, the Christian Right inserted an old standby element in the debate: the threat of federally funded abortions. Conservative beltway strategists recognized an opportunity to build the social conservatives' base by cultivating fear among many people who are uncertain about their own health care future.

Some 20 conservative congressional Democrats, the prolife equivalent of the so-called "Blue Dogs," mobilized around the possibility that abortion funding would



Tim Sloan/AFP/Getty Images

be included, even by a lack of reference to the specific procedure, causing some realignment of potential votes. Prolife organizations joined the fray with a webinar, "Stop the Abortion Mandate," hosted by 70 prolife organizations who claimed an audience of over 36,000 people.² "Unless you can specifically exclude abortion, it will be part of any federalized health care system," said Charmaine Yoest, executive director of Americans United for Life.³ Of course, most federal funding for abortions has been prohibited since 1976 by the Hyde Amendment.⁴

Nancy Keenan, executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice America, called the campaign for what it was: "What [Tony Perkins, head of the Family Research Council] and his allies are demanding is a new nationwide abortion ban in the private health insurance market."⁵

In this way the antichoice Right began

its attempt to turn the health care debate into a rallying cry against abortion, while simultaneously demonstrating its muscle on Capitol Hill. Linked with conservative caucuses in the House and Senate who worked feverishly to cut the costs of a reform package, the social conservatives contributed to the slowdown of negotiations that prevented legislation reaching the floor of Congress by the August recess.

What has motivated such unwavering opposition? Whether around health reform or sexuality education, the Right's anti-choice campaigns repeatedly draw deeply on their supporters' beliefs and fears, including the sense that modern values are usurping "traditional," Christian ones and a drumbeat of anxiety about women's power.⁶ The health care campaign also illustrates the anti-abortion Right's favorite tactic: the patient erection of barrier after barrier in locality after locality against

Pam Chamberlain is a Public Eye editorial board member and Senior Researcher at Political Research Associates. This article is taken from her new introduction to her updated Activist Resource Kit Defending Reproductive Rights, new on www.publiceye.org.

women's access to reproductive services. This approach evolved over time following a 20-year failure to overturn the 1974 Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* that decriminalized abortion. Opposing abortion continues to be a favorite activity of the Right, in part because it carries such salient symbolic power.

But abortion is by no means the only reproductive issue that the Right targets. They oppose using tax dollars for a wide range of additional services, from contraception and sexuality education to tolerance for diverse family structures and parenting styles. Challenges to patriarchal values invoke fear, not just about women's issues but also around any threat to the political or economic status quo. And opposition to public funding of such services, which appeals to "small government" supporters, affects poor women and women of color the most, exacerbating race and class inequities.

Reviewing the scope of opposition in the last decade reveals some interesting patterns.

Some of these campaigns are confrontational, like individuals who stalk and harass abortion providers and their patients. Dr. George Tiller's assassination in May 2009 and its aftermath is a tragic example of an extreme form of such militancy. Others focus on more conventional activities like legislative lobbying. But what unites these efforts is the core belief that abortion must be stopped.

Reframing the Debate: Conservative Activism since 2000

While abortion remains legal, this incremental strategy means abortion services are increasingly difficult to obtain. Both inside the United States and internationally incremental obstacles to abortion access function like glass shards on a road, making it harder for women to reach their reproductive goals. Some of these obstacles are obvious: state laws that require waiting periods or counseling sessions that include ultrasound images, "education" about the alleged harm of abortion, or parental noti-

fication requirements for minors.

Some are less in the public eye, like the administrative trivia heaped on abortion clinics through so-called "TRAP" laws, Targeted Regulations for Abortion Providers. Designed to harass clinics and their employees, these mostly local policies add unnecessary hurdles to abortion access. An example is the South Dakota informed consent law, one of several dozen similar state laws that require abortion providers to inform women that abor-

Both inside the United States and internationally incremental obstacles to abortion access function like glass shards on a road, making it harder for women to reach their reproductive goals.

tion takes the life of a human being and carries with it health risks.⁷ Another is designed to regulate the width of hallways in clinic buildings.⁸

More directly, multiple state and federal laws passed since 2000 limit access to abortion. For instance, as of the summer of 2009, all but ten states have passed laws requiring some form of parental notification before a minor's abortion, the result of dogged local organizing. Another popular tactic: state and federal "conscience clause" regulations allowing medical personnel to opt out of providing reproductive services (see box). At the federal level, the Supreme Court in 2007 upheld the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. In 2004, after five years of lobbying, Congress passed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act establishing that a fetus can be a victim of violent crime.

On the other hand, opponents failed to block the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from approving Plan B, popularly

known as the morning after pill, which can prevent pregnancy if taken within 120 hours of having unprotected sex. Just this April, bowing to a court order, the FDA made it available without restriction to 17 year olds.⁹ After twelve years of successful delay, conservative activists were ultimately unable to stop the Clinton Administration from approving "RU 486," now referred to by its brand name Mifeprex, a medication used to induce abortion in the first two months of pregnancy. In combination with Misoprostol, it is now a widely used alternative to surgical abortions.

Within days of taking office in 2009, President Obama also lifted the "global gag rule" preventing U.S. foreign aid funds from going to organizations that support or provide abortion. Despite that setback, the antichoice forces continue their two-decades long campaign to end abortion globally. The Helms Amendment, in effect since 1973, still prohibits U.S. funds from being used to support abortions through foreign aid. Starting in the 1990s, the U.S. Christian Right has invested resources at the United Nations to bring an anti-abortion position to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), official U.S. government delegations, and sympathetic governments in this important international diplomatic venue. The Right has defined the "right to life" as a human right, bringing a new, "friendlier" frame to the international reproductive rights debate. At the same time they have cultivated a growing distrust of the U.N. among prolife activists. Despite strong advocacy from progressive NGOs, they continue trying to insert a prolife, pro-abstinence position to influence funding and policy development at the international level.¹⁰

Three Current Anti-Abortion Arguments

Despite the range of attacks on multiple reproductive issues, opposition to abortion remains a lynchpin of conservative organizing. Whittling away at abortion rights from multiple angles provides con-

tinuous opportunities for movement supporters to stay active; there is always another campaign that needs their help. To maintain high public interest and mobilization, antichoice forces deploy carefully crafted claims asserting both moral superiority and an obligation to act. Their main arguments can be summarized by the following three phrases: “The Culture of Life Must Resist the Culture of Death,” “Women Must be Protected from Harm,” and “The Fetus is a Person.”

“The Culture of Life Requires Us to Oppose Abortion”

Drawing on Roman Catholicism’s idea of the culture of life, conservative strategists have managed to unite campaigns against abortion, contraception, euthanasia, and embryonic stem cell research as part of a “Culture of Death.” Their own position, of course, reflects a “Culture of Life.” For them, this so-called Culture of Death could include any barrier or chemical contraceptive device, and it is embodied in incidents like the 2005 Terri Schiavo case, in

which the husband and parents of a severely injured woman fought over her end of life rights for seven years. Even a secular worldview analyzing events not as acts of God but as the interplay of human relationships is seen as cheapening the sacred idea of life and must be challenged as part of the culture of death.¹¹ This frame is effective in its simplicity, using an absolute polarization of positions that says, “Either you are for life, or against it.” Devout Christians who accept the frame of a Culture of Life feel a moral imperative to act against abortion and other elements that run contrary to their beliefs.

This stark moralism nurtures a return to the shame about having an abortion, an emotion encouraged by its past illegality and also because of the opposition of conservative religious groups. In recent years both conservative Roman Catholic and Protestant anti-abortion activists have sought to restigmatize the procedure.¹² The shaming of women has become so commonplace that public figures including such stalwart prochoice politicians as Hillary Clinton have described abortion as a “tragic” choice.¹³

One arena where anti-abortion activists have found growing success is in popularizing, as a matter of conscience, the right of pharmacists, nurses, doctors and others to refuse to dispense care related to abortion and birth control. In the 1980s and ’90s activists organized “prolife” physicians to state publicly that they would refuse to perform or assist in abortions. Activists successfully limited the number of medical students who were trained in basic abortion techniques. They organized pharmacists to refuse to dispense the morning after pill as violating their moral opposition to abortion. And they have lobbied for “conscience clauses” to be enacted as state laws, protecting health care providers and even facility employees who refuse to treat or dispense despite their duty to do so. As of the summer of 2009, 46 states allow some health care providers to refuse to provide abortion services, and 13 states have some form of refusal clause around providing contraceptive services. (see box)¹⁴

CONSCIENCE CLAUSES ARE ONLY A BEGINNING

Before Congress passed the Hyde Amendment in 1976, about a third of all abortions performed in the United States were for poor women on Medicaid. “No other medical procedure was singled out for exclusion,” National Network of Abortion Funds reported. “Today, 33 states have followed suit, prohibiting state Medicaid funding as well.” All but one of these states (South Dakota) follows the Hyde exceptions of rape, incest, or life endangerment.²¹ The report details the disproportionate burdens placed on disadvantaged women, and observes that “women of color disproportionately depend on such coverage, making abortion funding a matter of racial justice as well as economic justice and women’s rights.”

But the federal restrictions do not stop with Medicaid. Over the years, Congress has also legislated against access to abortion via federal health plans, women in the military and Peace Corps, disabled women, residents of the District of Columbia, federal prisoners, and women covered by the Indian Health Service. Indeed, it could be fairly argued that except for the legal right to an abortion, federal policies constitute the greatest abortion reduction program of all. “Prior to 1996,” states NNAF report, “legal immigrants and U.S. citizens were equally eligible for Medicaid.” But the 1996 welfare reform law signed by President Clinton required a five-year waiting period before most new legal immigrants could even apply. Less than half of the states fill in the five year gap with their own funds, and nine states permanently deny Medicaid coverage to noncitizen residents.

An additional issue has been the matter of “conscience clauses.” The original conscience clause legislation passed in 1973 in the wake of Roe “states that public officials may not require individuals or entities who receive certain public funds to perform abortion or sterilization procedures or to make facilities or personnel available for the performance of such procedures if such performance “would be contrary to [the individual or entity’s] religious beliefs or moral convictions.”²² This has allowed even major medical facilities such as Catholic hospitals to refuse to deal with abortions without jeopardizing their ability to receive public grants and contracts or affect their tax exempt status. A new rule promulgated late in the Bush administration expanded and particularized the exemptions, stating that health workers may even refuse to provide information or advice regarding abortion. At this writing, the Obama administration has indicated it will rescind the Bush rule, but leave some kind “reasonable” exemptions in place.

What we see now is a far ranging effort on the part of anti-abortion forces to use conscience clauses as wedge, pitting religious supremacist notions of religious freedom against the civil and human rights of others.

—Frederick Clarkson

Fathers of “unborn children” are another growing constituency. What once was an early tactic to challenge *Roe*, organizing fathers has again become popular. Influenced by the fathers’ rights movement, which lobbies for divorce and custody laws that favor men, groups of anti-abortion fathers now identify as a class of individuals whose rights have been violated by women they say did not involve them in the decision to have an abortion.¹⁵ Anti-choice groups like the National Right to Life Committee have begun to assert that men are victims of abortion, claiming another class of people injured by the procedure.¹⁶

“Women Must be Protected from Harm”

Despite the reality that an abortion is safer than childbirth, anti-abortion organizers have increasingly framed the procedure as harmful to women.¹⁷ Various spokespeople claim that they are sympathetic to a woman who faces an unintended pregnancy and are only concerned for her health and wellbeing. But upon examination, it becomes clear that their concern about the alleged physical and mental health risks is a vehicle for their personal moral objections to abortion. Nevertheless, the faulty notions that abortion necessarily causes depression, complications in later pregnancies, and that it increases the risk for breast cancer and even suicide are dangerous and misleading narratives that have unfortunately been asserted often enough to enter common conversation.

This “woman-centered” posture has attracted those who are sympathetic to a pro-woman argument, including prolife feminists who feel women deserve better treatment. Such reasoning is similar to arguments that seek to protect youth from unintended pregnancies, disease, and even death by discouraging premarital sexual activity. In both cases the underlying motivations for such apparent compassion are the same: social control of sexuality that threatens the *status quo* and the cultivation of a mass political movement to support

such conservative ideas.

A more recent trend in this “woman-centered” agenda is to assert that since abortions are harmful to women, they must be made rare. The phrase “abortion reduction” resonates for groups representing a wide spectrum of political beliefs about abortion, including the Obama administration. This debate, however, was initiated and driven by conservative strategists from groups such as Third Way who have called for ways to seek “common ground” with prochoice advocates. Despite an appearance of compromise, the consis-

Despite the reality that an abortion is safer than childbirth, anti-abortion organizers have increasingly framed the procedure as harmful to women.

tent long-term goal of the anti-abortion movement has remained steady: ending legal abortion altogether. However attractive the issue of common ground is to those weary of the culture wars, it should be examined carefully for its historical roots, current tactics, and ultimate impact.

By focusing only on cutting the *number* of abortions performed, some conservative advocates of abortion reduction hope to appeal to moderates, including some communities of faith, while studiously avoiding the factors that contribute to the *need* for abortions. Factors contributing to a need for abortion include inadequate sexuality education or health care, economic distress, lack of a supportive partner, and the dismissal of the ability of a woman to make her own decisions. Not addressing these

needs through better family planning and more economic support, while accepting the logic of “abortion reduction,” could strengthen the argument for further limiting access to the procedure—a clear anti-choice strategy.

In fact, some conservatives have floated the idea that there is no such thing as a need for abortion, which in their minds can always be circumvented by carrying an unplanned pregnancy to term or by adoption. Deirdre McQuaid, spokesperson for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, claimed:

The phrase “reducing the need for abortion” is not a common-ground phrase. We would say that there is no need for abortion, that abortions are signs that we have not met the needs of women. There is no authentic need for abortion.¹⁸

Rather than the vague concept of “abortion reduction,” prochoice groups have suggested using “reducing unwanted pregnancies” instead, a phrase that unambiguously describes the real issue.

A well-developed means by which activists claim to demonstrate “care” for women is by running crisis pregnancy centers, which they often represent as counseling centers for pregnant women who need advice about their options. In reality, by locating near abortion clinics or schools, they can attract women who may mistake them for a medical facility that provides abortion services. Once inside, women are presented with arguments designed to dissuade them from undergoing an abortion. The ultrasound image has become a powerful tool to interrupt some women’s plans for abortion; seeing an image of one’s fetus can surface moral uncertainties about the procedure. Beginning in 2001, some of the centers received public funding, including support for abstinence education through the Community Based Abstinence Education Act (CBAE), although that strand of funding has ended under the Obama administration. Nevertheless, the anti-choice movement continues to fundraise for the

placement of ultrasound machines in their clinics, another tactic designed to keep their base motivated.

“Fetal Personhood”

A persistent conservative frame about abortion focuses not on the woman but on the fetus, which is increasingly defined as a human being from the moment of conception. Accepting “fetal personhood” as a valid idea repositions the debate about abortion away from a woman’s right to self-determination and focuses instead on the alleged human rights of the fetus. Campaigns to support the civil rights of fetuses have sprung up, encouraging legislation like Colorado’s unsuccessful Amendment 48 in 2008 and the federal Unborn Victims of Violence Act enacted in 2004.¹⁹ In an era of expanding use of human rights as a frame for progressive organizing, this emphasis on fetal rights has created an alternative, opportunistic use of a human rights framework for conservative ends that challenges women’s rights.

Opposition to human embryonic stem cell research peaked during the first years after 2000 when work on embryonic stem cells was prohibited by then-President Bush and has declined as adult stem cell research begins to look like a promising alternative. When President Obama lifted the restrictions on stem cell research in March 2009, the debate reopened with conservatives arguing that research on embryonic stem cells constituted the killing of a human. Focus on the Family attempted to capitalize on the shared liberal and conservative objections to egg donations by appropriating feminist rhetoric about the harmful effects of egg harvesting, in their campaign, *Women’s Voices Against Cloning*.

In the last decade, some African-American anti-abortion spokespeople have reinvented the Black Nationalist message that widespread use of abortion in their communities is a form of Black genocide. This approach has been influenced by strategists like White theologian Francis

Schaeffer who began to use a racially charged frame to talk about abortion in the 1970s. Without abortion, many more African-American babies would have been born in the United States, they say. According to pundits like Alveda King and Bishop Harry Jackson, the current rate of abortion among African-American women is a tragedy of mammoth proportions. Jackson calls abortion “a major crime,” while King asserts that supporting abortion is a deliberate racist attempt to diminish the power of African Americans in this country.

Access to contraception and abortion

By focusing only on cutting the number of abortions performed, some conservative advocates of abortion reduction hope to appeal to moderates while studiously avoiding the factors that contribute to the need for abortions.

became easier with other reproductive options like emergency contraception and medication (non-surgical) abortion. These products have challenged anti-abortion activists to come up with an approach that disparages the pills themselves as dangerous and encouraging of immoral behavior. Years of effort to prevent their manufacture and distribution have so far not been able to stop their widespread use. Recently, some opponents of abortion have argued that Plan B (emergency contraception) does indeed trigger an abortion, an argument that involves defining the beginning of life at the moment of fertilization rather than at implantation, which occurs afterwards.

Another tactic is to generalize that all contraception is wrong because it violates

church teachings, as with the renewed interest in the Roman Catholic Church’s 1968 encyclical on the matter, *Humanae Vitae*. This has resulted in some back and forth wrangling at the federal level around personal conscience. (See box.)

Widening the Lens: Opposing More than Abortion and Contraception

Energizing the antichoice movement further are efforts to limit government support for other reproductive services such as fertility treatments and certain prenatal and children’s health programs. By limiting publicly-funded coverage, they directly target low-income women’s reproductive rights.

In this campaign, conservative activists capitalize on existing prejudices against vulnerable groups to further their own political goals. For instance, anti-immigrant feelings have been channeled into resentment about health care for undocumented residents. Critics scapegoat “anchor babies,” children of immigrants whom critics say intentionally were born in the United States to secure the parents’ legal immigration status. Persistent homophobic attitudes allow “pro-family” groups to criticize access to reproductive technologies for LGBT people who want children. This dovetails with the campaign against gay rights—a financial “cash cow” for the Christian Right.

The last decade has been a turning point for progressive activists in understanding how the Right functions around reproductive issues. As social conservatives sharpened their attacks on women and their health and well-being, awareness has grown that the Right links its opposition to reproductive rights with a broader agenda of conservative resistance to social change. The Christian Right has used the social issues of reproductive rights, and same sex marriage and other LGBT equality issues, as the foundation on which to build and sustain its political power.

The strengthening of the Reproductive

Justice movement since 2000 is the best hope for responding to the Right's attacks on women, because it connects the dots showing how women actually go about making and sustaining a family in rural Idaho, inner city Atlanta, and anywhere in between. Progressive women of color and their allies focused their ideas into a movement that considers how women are affected differently by policies on abortion, health care, and social supports as a result of their class, age, sexual orientation, and race. Activists from the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, and others focus attention on access to abortion and contraception along with the freedom to decide how and when to have children, readily available and accurate information about women's health and sexuality, and the guarantee of social and economic supports to realize women's decisions about their lives.²⁰

The undeniable impact of the Right is revealed in impoverished families struggling to stay together when wages are low and child care inaccessible. It also is apparent when a woman feels forced to have a child because there is no affordable abortion facility anywhere nearby. Reproductive Justice addresses the realities of women's lived experience, but it also exposes the undeniable outcomes of the Right's attacks.

This movement gives us a blueprint for how to respond, a vital resource since there is no indication that antichoice forces will slacken off in pursuit of their goals. On the contrary, Obama's election has propelled the Right into a frenzy of

state and federal politicking. The health care debate is just one example of renewed opposition. Abortion remains legal, but the Right's combination of skillfully refined rhetoric and carefully chosen tactics have prevented many women, especially targeted and marginalized ones, from gaining access not only to abortion services but to the wider range of reproductive services and rights. Challenging such attacks requires an untangling of the interrelationships and an awareness of how and why they function as they do. ■

End Notes

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JANICE SHAW CROUSE *cont'd from page 1*

Janice Crouse, 68, is the Zelig of socially conservative spokespeople, popping up on the central battlefields of the Religious Right over the past 20 years. First you will find her attacking the United Methodist Women as a virtual communist front on behalf of the Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD), a notorious right-wing organization challenging the liberalism of mainline Protestant churches. Then you will find her challenging liberals in the halls of the United Nations. Now she is the director of the Beverly LaHaye Institute, the Washington, D.C.-based think tank of the Christian women's organization Concerned Women for America (CWA), which claims half a million members. A communications specialist—she holds a Ph.D. in the field—Crouse enjoys the considerable support of the conservative press and is able to test soundbites and political arguments on their websites and in their pages. But while Beverly LaHaye, the founder of CWA for whom her think tank is named, focuses almost exclusively on reaching conservative Christian women in the United States, Crouse goes out into the broader world, spreading her message through mainstream television.

Conservative pundits Michelle Malkin, Laura Ingraham, and Ann Coulter are all independent commentators who push the envelope of acceptable public rhetoric. They are free-wheeling self-promoters working the power of their “brand.” Crouse's power, by contrast, comes from her association with movement organizations in a conservative White Christian world—whether as a staff person with the IRD in the 1990s, or at the Beverly LaHaye Institute today. In that, she is similar to other female Christian Right spokespeople, including her boss Wendy Wright, the president of CWA, and her daughter Charmaine Yost, President of Americans United for Life, whose voices are heard because of the organizations which back them.

As an organizational player, Crouse is

Pam Chamberlain is a Public Eye editorial board member and senior researcher at Political Research Associates.

focused not just on wordsmithing but on strategizing and devising tactics to enhance her group's power, and diminish that of liberals and the Left, much like a leading spokeswoman of earlier years, Phyllis Schlafly. Unlike Schlafly, Crouse is not a player within the Republican Party and certainly hasn't achieved her prominence. Yet working through the sphere of a women's organization, she pushes the boundaries of power for a conservative Christian woman thinker.

Family and faith are the two poles of Crouse's moral compass. The oldest of seven children, she spent her childhood in Milstead, Georgia. Both parents were of strong religious faith, and each became Methodist ministers later in their lives following study at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. In 1961, Crouse also graduated from a Methodist school, Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky, her father's alma

Navigating the boundaries between Christian conservatives and the outside world moved Crouse beyond punditry and manifestos to policy.

mater. She majored in speech and English and was a news anchor on the campus radio station. At Asbury, she met her future husband Gilbert Crouse.

Janice Crouse's views are firmly rooted in her religious convictions, shaped by her Methodist upbringing and her solid commitment to the most conservative traditions of her church. Yet her doctoral dissertation in communications theory at



Congressional Quarterly/Getty Images

Janice Shaw Crouse is a verbal tactician of the Christian Right whose harsh rhetoric doesn't play well with secular audiences.

State University of New York at Buffalo (1979) was on the decidedly secular topic of who won the Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford 1976 televised presidential debates. By the time she finished her degree, she had two children.²

Still, even her academic analysis of how media can help or hurt a candidate contains evidence of Crouse's religious beliefs. She dedicated her thesis to her husband and children with poems that read as prayers to a God who has ultimate power over men and women and under whose gaze a wife gratefully finds her place in the family.

Like many conservative women, she sees feminism as an unnecessary crutch for an ambitious woman who is capable of succeeding on her own individual merits. Her own professional career began in academia, as a teacher, debate team coach, and administrator at a series of schools: Asbury, Purdue, and Ball State, where she learned to balance the competing demands of home, relationships, and work.

Her critique of feminism is also based on a belief that it is a secular solution to problems that are basically spiritual in nature. In a 2003 reminiscence of meeting Betty Friedan on Capitol Hill, she criticized

the feminist for her personal shortcomings (“rude, nasty, self-serving, and imperious”) and her failure when it came to developing a lasting relationship with a man.³ Contrast this snide personal attack with Beverly LaHaye’s political one, who, by her own account, founded Concerned Women for America to provide a conservative Christian response to the growing feminist movement.

On the other hand, Crouse is moved so strongly by issues she shares with feminists, domestic violence and sex trafficking, that she has become a fervent activist, lobbying on behalf of protective legislation. In this she shares the political goals of CWA as a whole. Begun as grassroots prayer circles for women, and nurtured through effective direct mail, CWA was launched in 1979 to mobilize church women to become more active in conservative political causes. With guidance from Beverly LaHaye and a group of men who recognized the value of organizing conservative women, the group has grown into an influential lobbying force in Washington. As a women’s organization, CWA recognized the need to respond to feminism as a movement and to try to attract those whom Crouse calls “mainstream.”⁴ Occasionally this takes the form of an issue that resonates with women across a broad political spectrum, like the sexual exploitation of women.

Crouse mused in 2003 that feminism rests on a “fundamental misunderstanding of the origins of power.” Instead of mobilizing a special interest group to make demands on the structural shortcomings of the status quo, women need to see that the power they seek comes from another source, an individual relationship with God. According to Crouse, this power analysis is rooted in Judeo-Christian thought. Authentic power originates in God, not in humans, and people who believe otherwise are misguided.

In the Old Testament, God says clearly that power comes from his spirit, “not by might, nor by power.” In the New Testament, Jesus reiterates that all “power and authority” are from Him.⁵

Crouse often returns to this analysis of feminism, discounting it as a mistaken, “utopian” approach to social change. Instead, she promotes the purer, more individualistic solution presented by “The Strength of a Godly Woman,” a phrase that became the title of her 2001 book coauthored with Beverly LaHaye. According to this view, a deep faith in God will allow women to realize their individual sources of strength, the true center of empowerment. “People were happy to have a secular and sophisticated sounding label for their spiritual hunger, and thousands

Like many conservative women, she sees feminism as an unnecessary crutch for an ambitious woman who is capable of succeeding on her own individual merits.

sought to fill their emptiness with feminist manna,” she said of the popularity of Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*.⁶

In 2003 Crouse spoke before a Princeton college group called the Organization for Women Leaders (OWL) which seeks to “rewrite the definition of feminism at Princeton.” Standing at the podium, she described the intersection of conservatism and feminism as sharing noble ideals while blaming the feminist movement for modern society’s social ills. Quoting supermodel Cindy Crawford, a celebrity not known for her political views, Crouse said, “The word feminist has such negative connotations to me.” Crouse continued, “[F]eminist ideals have betrayed us and produced massive damage both to women and to their children,” and then detailed

the social problems she claims feminism and the sexual revolution intensified: divorce, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, and out-of-wedlock births. “Feminism has gone the wrong way, baby! Feminism is out of step with mainstream women.”⁷

In an attempt to attract ambitious women (like her Princeton audience) away from identifying with a progressive social change movement, she delivered her final argument: Success for women is not just a paycheck and status.

Feminism has lost sight of what it is that women REALLY want. Most women want to love and be loved. They want the freedom to be all they can be and they want to be treated with dignity and respect. They also want the opportunity to have meaningful careers and productive lives—but most aren’t willing for their ambition to harm their relationships or damage their children.⁸

Central to her belief that feminism is misguided is her rejection of alternative lifestyles and families in favor of traditional roles for men and women in family life. Crouse’s own life story reflects her preference for a conventional nuclear family: she came from one and she lives in one. She attributes her success in balancing home and work to her marriage to her husband Gil, a man of “integrity and character” with whom she “made a covenant to make our marriage a priority, to put each other first, and to grow together in our interests and activities.”⁹ She is proud of their accomplishments and those of her children, and she revels in her grandchildren’s lives. This history suits her public role as a spokesperson for traditional family structures, and like feminists who bring the personal and political together, she discusses it publicly, often.

Crouse’s history as a conservative religious woman with an ability to write has stood her in good stead for finding jobs. Moving to Washington in 1991, she landed a job as a speechwriter in George H.W. Bush’s White House. By the mid-90s, she



was executive director of the Ecumenical Coalition on Women and Society, a project of the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD).¹⁰ IRD is a right-wing group founded by neoconservatives to weaken the liberal political influence of mainstream Protestant churches. Working with movements within the denominations that support conservative theology, its stated purpose is to promote spiritual renewal. But its influence has been divisive, creating schisms between progressives and conservatives in those churches, largely around culture war issues such as gay and women's rights. Writing on behalf of IRD, Crouse authored "A Christian Woman's Declaration," first published in 1997, laying out a set of religious and political beliefs intended to unite conservative women across mainstream denominations to support IRD's agenda.¹¹ It is a tactical document, aiming to dissolve denominational boundaries, and attract and mobilize women

with a new evangelical-flavored sense of themselves. At the same time the declaration reveals much of the ideology that guides Crouse's personal and political life.

As an ecumenical document, the language carefully reflects a conservative, broadly evangelical perspective for women: the authority of the Bible, the universality of sin and redemption through Christ, and the primacy of a natural, God-given order that allows men and women to unite in complementary roles through heterosexual marriage. It reflects a Christian Nationalist view of social institutions "including family, church and government" as "ordained by God."¹²

But the document is unequivocal in its stance on social issues. It identifies culture battles on several fronts and asks women to pledge to respond to them as threats to democracy. They include moral relativism that denies absolute truth (a reference to secularism), the perspective that looks at

social problems in terms of victims and oppressors (a reference to Marxism), the preference of individual rights over personal responsibility (especially in the realm of sexual activity) and individual autonomy at the expense of family, and pleasure-seeking and materialism as the misguided twin purposes of life.

According to the declaration, these trends dangerously feed feminism, which she defines negatively as "revolutionary" since it seeks to restructure society in ways that negate these basic ecumenical principles. "Radical feminism" has defined gender as a social construct, not a set of God-given differences, and feminists see equality as identical outcomes between men and women rather than equal opportunity. The document goes on to say that feminists portray women as victims, which exaggerates women's suffering, and it rejects "Biblically-based faith and time-tested moral behavior" such as abstinence before

TAKING ON PLAYBOY

Janice Crouse's better thinking emerges when she uses her training in media analysis, as in her June 2009 *Town Hall* Online contribution, "*Playboy* Takes on the Ladies."²⁶ This challenge to *Playboy's* tasteless web article about having sex with the top ten conservative women "hotties" fueled a campaign forcing the article's removal. In her piece, she untangled a knot of issues around the exploitation of women and free speech and flung it back to liberals, while fiercely defending her female colleagues. And she took on the charge that right-wing pundits have incited violence, a reference to the recent criticism of the factors influencing the Tiller murder.

This latest incident is just another in a long line of insulting articles filled with "hate speech" about Conservatives that Liberals routinely churn out, while screaming about the supposed prevalence of incendiary right-wing language.

marriage, monogamy, and the importance of marriage "between one man and one woman."

What is perhaps the most interesting part of the document is the skill with which it calls for women to resist changes within the church because they "undermine" the churches themselves. After linking theological challenges to orthodox tenets of faith with congregants' embrace of modern social values, especially in the area of sexuality, the declaration then calls on women to "repudiate the tolerance of sinful behavior patterns" by actively speaking out in the political arena. This IRD document lays out a philosophy that would give religious strength to an ideological challenge to United Methodist Women's (UMW) national policymaking arm, the Women's Division, from the RENEW movement, the Methodist women's group affiliated with IRD. That challenge remains today, as RENEW continues to question the motives, funding, and religious beliefs of the Women's Division, and ensures gay clergy and same sex marriages find no place within the United Methodist Church. It was Crouse who set out the blueprint and the call to arms, picked up not only by RENEW but by women in the Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and Episcopal churches that continue to this day.

Even though she had by then been directing CWA's Beverly LaHaye Institute

for six years, in September 2005 Crouse was still engaged enough in this battle to join a panel of RENEW women at a public discussion with United Methodist Women (UMW) leaders at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.. The format, akin to a formal debate with short presentations and rebuttals, was designed to subdue some of the rancor developed over years of struggle between the two groups. The forum likely reinforced each side's views, but Crouse's presentation stood out in an interchange otherwise characterized by stolid, even tempers.

The UMW's leaders asked the question, "Do you think that conscientious Christians working to further the mission of Christ can have legitimate differences about matters of biblical interpretation and about matters of appropriate social engagements in the world?" In a prepared response, Crouse began her answer with a shot across the bow. "We cannot accept theologies that are saccharine substitutes for the hard thinking that faith requires," she responded and then cited an Anglican, William Temple, former Archbishop of Canterbury. "If your conception of God is wrong," she quoted, "the more religion you get, the more dangerous you become to yourselves and others."¹³ Strong feelings characterize Crouse's opinions, and she continues to serve as a consultant to the RENEW movement.

Crouse's views are perhaps most forcefully expressed when she writes about sex. During the debates over the content of sexuality education, which reached a peak in 2007 and 2008, she was a fierce supporter of abstinence-until-marriage education. When newly released figures showed a sharp decline in the pregnancy rate of 10-to-14 year olds in the United States, she wrote that the decline was due not to increased access to sexuality education and contraception, as public health officials believed, but to the success of abstinence-until-marriage teaching in the schools, an approach financially supported by the George W. Bush administration. She turns on those public health advocates as "pathetic feminists and their liberal supporters who are hell-bent on de-funding government support for teaching abstinence to the nation's children and teens."¹⁴

Crouse isn't shy about using harsh language in public, and she equates liberals with all manner of misdeeds, including supporting child prostitution. Listen to her response when the host of PBS's weekly news show *NOW*, David Brancaccio, asked her about possible downsides of Bush requiring international groups receiving U.S. HIV-AIDS money to pledge their opposition to prostitution and sex trafficking.

Brancaccio: Do you feel that this kind of pledge against prostitution would get in the way of condoms getting to places where maybe condoms should be used?

Crouse: Well, it definitely does get in the way of condom distribution. But the thing that I think is really important for the American public to understand is that condoms are not a solution to the problem....I'm against condoms as a solution to the problem of sexually transmitted diseases. I'm against condoms as a solution to the AIDS epidemic. I hear so many people blithely say, okay, let's distribute condoms and we'll cut down on the disease. We'll make it much safer for a girl to be a prosti-

tute. And she can choose this as an appropriate career option.

Brancaccio: You really see people, officials, promoting prostitution as some sort of legitimate career path?

Crouse: There's no question. And there are people who passionately believe that it's a matter of women's rights, and this is a way to make a living, particularly for people in very poor countries where there are not a lot of options for women.¹⁵

Here Crouse reworks a defense of sex workers to seem as if everyone who supports condom use also supports prostitution for young girls.

When Democratic Senator Harry Reid of Nevada and Democratic Congresswoman Louise Slaughter of New York reintroduced Prevention First, a package of moderate legislation designed to decrease unintended pregnancies in 2007, Crouse was there to respond.

There's a utopian view that women ought to be able to have sex any time they want without consequences—that's the bottom line of all these bills.¹⁶

While social conservatives would agree with Crouse and would find nothing untoward about her statement, supporters of Prevention First were outraged at her willingness to make categorical statements about sexual mores governing the writing of family planning legislation. As a writer of a letter to the editor at *Salon.com* responds to Crouse,

All actions have consequences. What the Right is talking about when they say "consequences" is really PUNISHMENT. They believe that women who have sex outside of heterosexual marriage (and those who engage in homosexual sex) need to be punished because they have sinned.¹⁷

This exchange illustrates a problem that someone in Crouse's position must encounter frequently. How do you speak about political positions on behalf of Chris-

tian conservatives to a general audience that may disagree with your religious beliefs? For someone with a background in communication theory, this must come as a particularly sensitive challenge.

At the annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), in February 2009, Janice Crouse was a little out of her element. Although introduced as "a mentor to every conservative woman and man in Washington" by Marjorie Dennenfelter of the anti-abortion Susan B. Anthony List, Crouse was bringing her message of the renewed battles in the culture wars to a young audience seemingly more interested in reducing the size and level of government intrusion into American lives

In front of a young crowd at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference in February, Janice Crouse was a little out of her element.

than in hearing about abortion or homosexuality. CPAC is sponsored by the American Conservative Union, a pro-business lobby supporting free market capitalism while embracing continuity and "tradition." The conference attracts conservatives of all ages, but ACU especially encourages attendance by college students. Was the thin crowd at her panel because the culture wars rhetoric seems worn out to this audience?

Crouse began by hitting Obama hard: "His rhetoric to reject the worn out language of the past was a threat to life, free speech, religious liberty, democracy, and national sovereignty.... Shrewdly and shamelessly he has used the financial cri-

sis to provide cover as he takes territory.... His two causes are women's issues and the radical leftist cause." She covered the most salient issues of the Christian Right in a few short minutes: abstinence education and welfare reform; the Fairness Doctrine (which would "decimate" Christian radio – "There go our opinion leaders off the dial!"); the United Nations; hate speech. "The unrelenting efforts to bulldoze Judeo-Christian values from the public square will be increasingly more blatant under the Obama administration," she asserted. Using the Oscars award ceremony as an emblem of American depravity, she decried:

The whole evening was an insult to mainstream American values. Sean Penn spent his few minutes of fame shaming Americans who are opposed to homosexual marriage. And the Best Actress Award went to Kate Winslet who played a Nazi pedophile!¹⁸

Avoiding obvious references to specific Christian thought, Crouse is left with rhetoric that resonates with many social conservatives but sounds shrill and desperate to secular ears. For this speech she garnered polite applause from the sparse audience.

Navigating the boundaries between Christian conservatives and the outside world moved Crouse beyond punditry and manifestos to policy. In her first major political role, she coordinated the presence of IRD's Ecumenical Council for Women

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and Society at the United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. By 2002, the Bush administration appointed her as an official U.S. delegate to U.N. meetings such as the 2002 Children's Summit and the 2003 meeting of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. Representing CWA at other U.N. meetings that deal with children and women, she has made a name for herself among conservatives as a shrewd strategist and among liberals as a tireless opponent. Crouse has exercised perhaps even greater influence at the United Nations than in the Methodist Church.

Her work at the United Nations has included efforts to block the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, or CEDAW. She claims that it defines discrimination too broadly and creates an opening for a new drive for the ratification in the United States of the Equal Rights Amendment. To Crouse and her allies, the United Nations robs America of national sovereignty on women's issues, since its treaties would challenge existing laws in the United States. She testified before Congress that, "Abortion is the driving force behind the CEDAW treaty."¹⁹ For similar reasons she opposes liberal control of the annual U.N. Commission on the Status of Women meetings, a body which has as its core goal the promotion of gender equality in the home, the workplace, and in public life. Should a liberal view prevail based on these concepts, she has warned, "These issues coalesce into demands for universal abortion rights and an insistence of the rights of the child to the neglect of parental responsibilities."²⁰

Beverly LaHaye and Phyllis Schlafly, two powerful conservative women of an earlier generation, differ from Crouse in their assessment of global power dynamics and have a broader analysis of the United Nations, seeing it as a threat to U.S. sovereignty and an attempt to weaken U.S. global influence. Crouse, on the other hand, chooses to focus exclusively on the moral issues of international bodies having the power to legislate secular values, such

as full reproductive rights for all women.

Charlotte Bunch, senior scholar at the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers, suggests Crouse's work "attacking reproductive rights is convenient because it also delivers for the right wing" wanting to weaken the U.N. in their pursuit of militarist foreign policy and global capitalism.²¹ In this, Crouse's work for CWA in the United Nations parallels her IRD work in disrupting mainline denominations. But at the U.N. she and other conservative delegates give the Christian Right a sense of empowerment on a global scale, while they, consciously or not, contribute to the overall lessening of U.N. influence.

Indeed, tactics used by the opposition at the U.N. look surprisingly similar to how the IRD functions within mainline church denominations. Dissenting church members or vocal NGO representatives acting divisively within their organizations can hinder, or at least slow progress, even though a majority of the organization has found agreement on the issues at hand. Crouse's active involvement in both arenas, encouraging the adherence to traditional, conservative Christian values while blocking resolution to issues affecting women and girls may be her greatest legacy.

Crouse promotes an active international alliance with conservatives outside the U.N. as well. This year Crouse secured CWA's cosponsorship of the August 2009 World Congress of Families, which brings together conservative activists every few years to promote the so-called "Natural Family," a phrase popularized by the conservative thinker Allan Carlson. Her relationship with Carlson, a former Heritage Foundation scholar now leading a think tank called the Howard Center, goes back many years. When his book, *The Natural Family: A Manifesto*, was published in 2005, Crouse, together with representatives of the Heritage Foundation, Alliance for the Family, and Priests for Life, joined the book launch at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., where Carlson called for battling liberal forces with an international declaration that defines the family as a married heterosexual couple and their

children. "Conservative social change at the global level requires, we believe, this networked alliance of orthodoxies," he said.

Crouse's statement was more emphatic, even caustic:

The alternatives to marriage, casual sex, cohabitation, single parenting are disastrous for women and children. The data clearly show the pathetic results of America's experiment in sexual liberation. The abandonment of the natural family has left women both rocking the baby and paying the rent.²²

In this case, the strategy of using exclusively secular language in describing religiously informed ideology seems to be working as a way to develop alliances across religious and international boundaries, attracting conservatives of several faiths. But such a feat is easier to accomplish when your audience members share a similar political orientation.

For many liberals and progressives who do not share her perspective, she can elicit strong reactions. Kyle Mantyla, senior analyst at People for the American Way explains:

Janice is predictable; I'll give her that. You always know where she's coming from. But she irritates progressives who can't stand the way she insists that her brand of conservative Christian morality must become public policy and apply to everyone.²³

Her coauthor and mentor, Beverly LaHaye, by contrast, says, "It takes a gutsy professional...to stand up for the family. I can tell you from my experience at the U.N., it's no easy job."²⁴

RIGHT WEB

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More and more these days, Crouse quotes other people's research and rarely publishes reports of her own, as she did after the Beverly LaHaye Institute began in 1999. Her doctorate keeps her branded as an "expert" although she insists she is no authority in any particular field. "I'm a Jack of all trades."²⁵

Perhaps. But Crouse rarely addresses other domestic issues like the economy, health care, or immigration, nor does she tackle the big issues of foreign policy: nuclear proliferation, terrorism, or war. Interestingly, she never talks about race. Instead, the dangers of casual sex, the promotion of heterosexual marriage, the misdirection of the United Nations, violence against women and girls, and on occasion, political analysis about the Woman Vote keep her interest.

Now pushing 70, Janice Crouse continues to rise in visibility as a Christian Right spokeswoman appealing to the older hard core of the movement. She does not have the youth or glamour of a Laura Ingraham, or the willingness of a Michelle Malkin to comment on a full spectrum of political topics which would make her a popular pundit. Instead, she functions under the liberal radar as a sort of stealth pep squad captain for conservative Christian family values, helping to generate the buzz that is required for a movement to maintain its foothold and perhaps gain a little ground. Her bitter rhetorical style may diminish her influence on those waiting to take charge once her generation retires from the scene. But for now, her ability to channel institutional energy in force against her opponents in the culture wars—whether in mainline churches, feminist groups, or the United Nations—makes her one of the most reliable, if underrecognized, representatives parlaying conservative Christian beliefs into political ammunition. ■

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²⁴ Beverly LaHaye, "A Pro-family Voice at the U.N.," *Family Voice*, May-June 2007, <http://www.cwfa.org/familyvoice/2007-05/FV.2007.MayJun.AProFamilyVoiceAtTheUN.pdf> accessed June 9 2009.

²⁵ Mark Maathuis, "Crouse," <http://www.markmathuis.pbworks.com/crouse> accessed June 6, 2009.

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POLITICS OF SCHISM *continued from page 1*

ing President Obama to give the commencement address, and the recent conversion of Florida's Father Alberto Cutié to the Episcopal Church.

Cutié, the former Roman Catholic priest and media star (known to many as "Father Oprah" for his advice to those struggling with both personal and religious issues), was exposed in the press as having a girlfriend. Forced to choose between the celibacy of the Roman Catholic priesthood and the life he wished to live, he left not only the priesthood but the Church.

Kathy believes, as many of us do, that priestly celibacy should be optional and that the priesthood should be open to women. We object to efforts by Church leaders to force their subjective teachings on non-Catholics and its attacks on religious pluralism and separation of church and state — often in league with the Religious Right. And we especially object to the belligerence directed at independent-thinking Catholics by a reactionary hierarchy. These conflicts are making it unbearable for many of us to stay in the Church. And some us think Church leaders are intentionally squeezing us out.

Kathy isn't so sure about that. She observes that many liberal-leaning Catholics like Father Cutié don't fight back but "just walk away." She thinks that the reactionary forces within the Catholic hierarchy "are fighting a lost cause," and that in "their moral posturing over President Obama's speech at Notre Dame, they run the risk of alienating a lot more Catholics than they realize."

But I think that the Catholic Right and the reactionaries in the hierarchy do indeed know what they are doing. They want those of us who embrace religious pluralism and liberalization within the church to leave a global religion — with its well-organized hierarchy and diplomatic nation-state status — solely in their hands. The movers and shakers of the Catholic Right are indeed

attempting to provoke a modern day schism within Catholicism and they are willing to lose untold numbers of members in order to achieve a leaner, arguably meaner, but in any case more traditionally orthodox and authoritarian Church. The Pope himself has called for a "a leaner, smaller, purer church."¹

Not only reproductive justice and equality issues are at stake. The time-tested Roman Catholic concern for economic justice and the poor, the rights of workers and immigrants, and a responsive government are anathema to the groups pushing for a more traditional church. The Catholic parish as a vital community for immigrants and poor people will be lost.

They believe shrinking the Church would only be temporary. Actually, a "pruning" is the more apt description of the agenda of those pushing schism. Liberal and

The Catholic Right wants those of us who embrace religious pluralism and liberalization within the church to leave a global religion solely in their hands.

moderate members — many of whom have small families — would be replaced by more traditional-minded Catholics who eschew family planning and would quickly augment the Church's numbers.

Schism is very much a top-down phenomenon. Influential bishops and priests backed by the Pope and right-wing lay intellectuals are aggressively pushing the Church rightward. Unlike the Protestant Reformation, when the reformers left to establish their own denomination, today we are seeing more of a "reverse schism," one in which those who actually oppose reform

and transparency create an atmosphere so hostile and so constricting that those actually desiring transparency and reform are forced out. They have little support at the base of the U.S. church. Even today, only somewhere between 50,000 to 100,000 out of 60 million American Catholics describe themselves as "traditionalist."²

I will talk more about the right-wing lay intellectuals' role in promoting schism in a later article. For now, I will just say that the struggle unites all kinds of Catholic conservatives, internationalist and isolationist, those supporting a robust government and a small one. Much of the Catholic Right pines for the return of the Latin Mass and are united on such matters as abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality and stem cell research. They merge theological with political conservatism.

Like several of the reactionary bishops who opposed Obama's appearance at Notre Dame, these leaders tend to be traditionalist and bemoan the modernization of the Church stemming from the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II). This was the three-year gathering of bishops and other church leaders launched by the marvelous Pope John XXIII that ended in 1965 with the Church extending its hand in dialog to Eastern Orthodox and other churches, saying that truth could be found outside of the Roman Catholic Church. Vatican II also encouraged lay members to study the Bible for themselves and dropped the Latin Mass in favor of Mass held in the congregants' own tongue with laypeople taking an active role in the service. The Second Vatican Council extended a hand to Jews by saying that Jews both in Jesus' time and today could not be held responsible for the killing of the messiah. The spirit of Vatican II is the spirit of dialog.

Vatican II also increased the power of the bishops against the pope, a decentralization which helped nurture the development of Liberation Theology in Latin America and Africa. By 1978, reversing Vatican II and forstalling any other liberalization seemed the far-fetched dream of a small group of reactionary bishops and cardinals, and a relatively small number of dissatisfied

Frank L. Cocozzelli is a regular contributor to Talk2Action.org, and president of the Institute for Progressive Christianity.

Catholics.

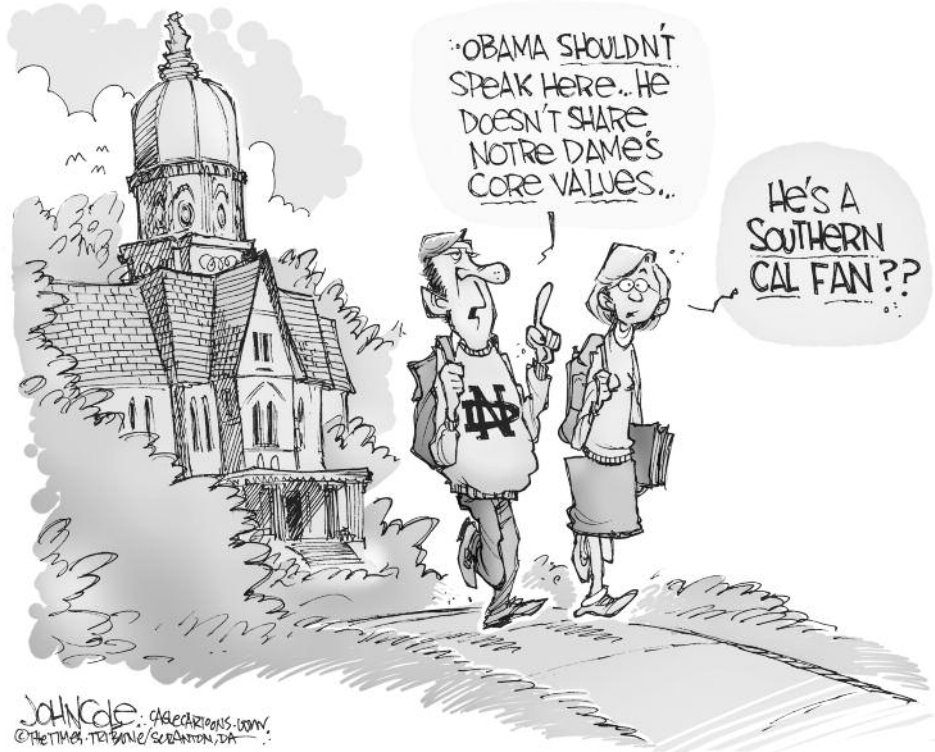
But the appointment of Pope John Paul II in that year, and his successor Pope Benedict XVI in April 2005, means the traditionalists' dream is no longer far-fetched. They enjoy a Catholic hierarchy with fewer liberal members. About three quarters of the world's bishops were appointed by Pope John Paul II following his ascendancy in 1978.³ With very few exceptions, they reflect a world-view whose spectrum usually extends from the socially conservative Cardinal John J. O'Connor to the communion-denying Cardinal Edmund Burke and even to the extreme of the self-professed militant warrior Bishop Robert Finn attached to the reactionary men's fraternal society Opus Dei.

Unless a moderate or liberal succeeds Pope Benedict XVI, the hierarchy will soon be wholly in the hands of the traditionalists. The bishops who attacked Notre Dame will represent the bulk of the church and liberal Catholics will go the way of liberal Republicans, as rarely sighted as a polar bear in a melting world. How did we get to this point?

The Second Vatican Council

Before the papacy of Pope John XXIII (1958-1963), there was little difficulty for the average American Catholic to reconcile one's Roman Catholicism with one's Americanism. Catholic economics were part and parcel of America's embrace of New Deal capitalism and the true battles over abortion and biological issues had yet to begin in earnest. It was only among the Church's theologians and hierarchy where democracy and modernity were pitted against orthodoxy. Essentially, Catholics who were both economically and religiously conservative had no avenue for influencing the Vatican simply because they were boxed in: an economically liberal Church was still religiously traditional.

Since the 1960s, issues such as civil rights, women's rights, and reproductive choice exacerbated the divide between more traditional Catholics, who wanted little or no change—and those who did. This had a partisan dimension.



John Cole/politicalcartoons.com

It is no accident that Opus Dei's allies in advocating a smaller, more orthodox church are closely aligned with the U.S. Right.

Politically conservative U.S. White Catholics became disenchanted with what they believed to be the Democratic Party's catering to Hispanic and African-American minorities. Although this perception probably exceeded reality, the additional focus on women's rights generally, and abortion in particular, clashed with Roman Catholic orthodoxy. Some Catholics then did the once unthinkable and started voting for what has been the party of the

Protestant Brahmins. Eventually those who saw the Church's liberalization as too similar to the Democratic Party's liberalization formed the core of what became the contemporary American Catholic Right. Then, disenchanted Catholics began falling away from the faith. New England lost one million Catholics over the past 20 years even as the region's overall population has grown.⁴ Between 2006 and 2007 alone, the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life reports that American Catholicism lost about 400,000 adherents, shrinking the playing field for the Right.⁵

The Catholic Right's hatred of modernity can be best summarized in philosopher Isaiah Berlin's observation that they embrace "the old Platonic belief in the philosopher-kings, who were entitled to give orders to others." Their common opposition to embryonic stem cell research, gay marriage, and abortion rights are classic manifestations of such a belief. Embryonic stem cell research, for example, begins to demystify science and in their eyes, removes the virtue of human heroism. Homosexuality supposedly runs contrary to a thirteenth century understanding of

natural law. And abortion—beyond the issues of life and death—presupposes a woman's equality with man, another belief that runs contrary to a thirteenth century understanding of the natural order of life.

A pluralism of values—a material element of modern liberal democracy—is therefore not acceptable. All must submit to one selective version of “the truth.” To that end, almost any form of dissent is viewed as disobedience. It is here that the church's conservative politics merge with a more authoritarian hierarchy. Back in the early 1960s, even some of his supporters looked askance at the way Pope John XXIII, the pope who launched Vatican II,

encouraged bishops and cardinals to openly air their disagreements with one another. For the more authoritarian-minded princes of the Church, “the truth” is not to be found in either bottom to top or lateral exchanges—or in respectful dialog with other faiths—but solely in top-down pronouncements grounded in ancient if not obsolete “tradition.”

Church traditionalists' goal is simple: a return to a pre-Vatican II Catholic Church, one where a Catholic toes the line, remains mum, or gets out. They object, among other things, to replacing the language of Mass from Latin to the local language; the elevation of conscience in relationship

with Magisterium (the “teaching authority of the Roman Catholic Church”). Perhaps more importantly the respectful view of other faiths enunciated by Vatican II and the ecumenical dialog that followed was anathema to those who viewed the one true church as the only path to eternal salvation.

But perhaps most shocking to the traditionalists was open dissent to the authority of the hierarchy from clergy as well as the rank and file. For those who followed St. Bernard of Clairvaux's neoplatonic admonition that “faith is to be believed, not disputed,” dissent, in and of itself, was tantamount to heresy.

With Pope John-Paul II's 1978 ascension, the traditionalist-minded conservatives now had a powerful ally setting Church policy. The socially conservative John-Paul reached out to reactionary-minded lay organizations like the plutocratic and free market-loving Opus Dei which his two predecessors wisely viewed with deep suspicion. A mix of laymen, bishops and priests, Opus Dei has historically worked to purge progressives from church ranks, notably in Latin America, and infuse Catholicism with right-wing principles. John Paul saw Opus Dei and other authoritarian-minded groups such as the Legionnaires of Christ and Communion y Liberación as a means to a more conservative Church. Dissent was increasingly equated with disloyalty.

The current Pope Benedict—formerly known as Cardinal Ratzinger—executed John-Paul's purges as head of the office of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, once known as the Office of the Inquisition. In that role, Ratzinger attempted, but failed, to condemn noted Liberation priest and theologian Gustavo Merino; successfully had Father Charles Curran, one of the chief American dissenters against the church's 1968 statement against artificial birth control, removed from his position as theologian and teacher of theology at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. (see box); and disciplined the liberal theologian Hans Küng for daring to question papal authority (although years earlier Küng brought a

THE DEFEAT OF 1968

Advocates of Vatican II and *aggiornamento* (“bringing things up-to-date”) reached a crossroads—or perhaps a roadblock—on July 25, 1968. That's when Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, which affirmed the Vatican's previous condemnation of artificial birth control. This was the first major victory for the traditionalists since the ascent of the liberal Pope John XXIII in 1958.

It is widely believed that John XXIII had wanted to relax the Catholic prohibition on artificial birth control. However, instead of bringing about change by his hand, the open-minded pontiff sought to do it through deliberation and consensus. To that end, shortly before his death in 1963 he established a commission of six European nontheologians to study the issue. Pope Paul VI expanded the commission to 72 members from around the world. These new members not only included theologians but medical doctors and five women.

People widely expected liberalization and it probably would have happened—had the more determined John XXIII been pope. Instead the well-meaning but less decisive Pope Paul VI was in power when the commission reached its overwhelming conclusion that birth control was not in violation of natural law and the decision to use it should be left to married couples.¹⁷

Pope Paul VI ignored the commission majority, perhaps swayed by intense last-minute lobbying by Church conservatives, as writer Thomas Cahill suggests. They included the future champion of the traditionalists, then-Archbishop Karol Wojtyła, the future Pope John-Paul II.¹⁸

The response by many Catholics was to openly dissent. Canadian bishops immediately issued the Winnipeg Statement that conscience, not dogma should be the deciding factor for couples deciding whether or not to use artificial birth control. Dissident Father Charles Curran, a theologian at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., was eventually ousted by the then-Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly known as the Office of the Inquisition), Cardinal Josef Ratzinger—now Pope Benedict XVI.

This was when the number of Catholics either not attending Mass or leaving the Church began to accelerate. And perhaps noting the liberal departures, the more reactionary forces bided their time, waiting for the moment to rebuild a pre-Vatican II Catholic Church for the next century.

younger Ratzinger to teach at the University at Tübingen, essentially being the future pope's academic mentor).

Now as Pope, Benedict's outreach to far right splinter groups such as the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX) takes Pope John Paul II's rapprochement with the far Right to a new level. SSPX is best known for its fondness for the Latin rite Mass and, in Europe, for its affinity for the French neofascist National Front Party. In January, Benedict accepted four bishops into the church ordained by an archbishop and SSPX leader in defiance of the Vatican in 1988. One, Richard Williamson, was a Holocaust denier who decried the "false messianic vocation of Jewish world-dominion." Benedict's acceptance of the bishops sparked an international firestorm.⁶

Apparently this pontiff's obsession with supposed schemes of secular moral relativism and nihilism, and his desire for traditionalism in the church, allowed him to turn a blind eye to the hateful ideology of Williamson and many other SSPX members. Finally, faced with outrage from Catholics far and wide, the Pope revoked his acceptance of Williamson in February.

While the Pope's embrace of SSPX backfired so badly that liberal Catholics won a rare victory, the message was clear: Traditionalists no matter their past transgressions can be brought back in the fold while liberal dissenters such as Father Charles Curran can go their own way (see box).

Shrinking the Church in America

The vast majority of Catholics—here and overseas—don't want a return to the Latin Mass. For me, the Latin Mass is very elitist, with the priest speaking almost in a whisper and his back facing the congregation. It is nothing more than a scheme to gain support from more reactionary forces both within the Church (Opus Dei) and somewhat estranged from the Church (SSPX).

Two years ago, the *New York Daily News* interviewed a priest, Reverend Brian Jordan, about the Latin Mass. He hit the nail on the head when he said,

For 24 years I have been a member

of an endangered species—the Catholic priesthood—and never celebrated the Mass in Latin because there was never a local pastoral need to do so There continues to be no national pastoral need to celebrate the Mass in Latin other than to satisfy a

SSPX is best known for its fondness for the Latin rite Mass and, in Europe, for its affinity for the French neofascist National Front Party.

small—albeit very influential—number of disgruntled Catholics.⁷

Helping power the push among right-wing Catholicism to shrink and purify the church in the United States is Opus Dei and its Washington, D.C. operative Rev. C. John McClosky. McCloskey, a former Wall Street executive, is a "self-described

supply-sider" according to journalist Chris Suellentrop, who "has a top-down strategy to transform the culture, too. He wants to turn Blue America into Red."⁸

McCloskey described his futuristic vision of the moderate and dissent-free Church of 2030 in a *Catholic World Report* article he published in May 2000:

"As you may have learned, there were approximately 60 million nominal Catholics at the beginning of the Great Jubilee at the turn of the century. You might ask how we went from that number down to our current 40 million. I guess the answer could be, to put it delicately, consolidation. It is not as bad as it looks. ... I mean to say only 10 percent of that base assented wholeheartedly to the teaching of the Church and practiced the sacraments in the minimal sense of Sunday Mass and at least yearly confession. The rest, as was inevitable, either left the Church, defected to the culture of death, passed away, or in some cases at least for a couple of decades, went to various Christian sects, what remained of mainstream Protestantism or Bible Christianity."⁹

He also gleefully notes that in this future Church, "Dissent has disappeared from the theological vocabulary."¹⁰

The danger that a politically active Opus Dei membership currently represents

Conversion Furthers Church Schism

High profile conversion is another tool of the agents promoting a leaner, more reactionary Catholic Church. Rev. C. John McCloskey, the Washington representative of the right-wing fraternal order Opus Dei, argues that in the future, "the influx of hundreds of thousands of Evangelical Protestants" would strengthen Church orthodoxy and make up the loss of disaffected congregants.¹⁶

McCloskey for example was personally instrumental in the conversions of rejected U.S. Supreme Court nominee Robert H. Bork, CNBC's Lawrence Kudlow, Republican Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas, NARAL cofounder Bernard Nathanson and pundit Robert Novak. Other high profile conservative Protestant converts include Deal Hudson who served as director of Catholic outreach for George W. Bush's 2000 and 2004 presidential campaigns; former GOP Speaker of the House and thrice-married Newt Gingrich; and twice-married Operation Rescue founder, Randall Terry.

to both Catholicism and liberal democracy is not from assassinations by imaginary albino monks (for the record, *contra The DaVinci Code*, there are no Opus Dei monks), but in its very plutocratic attitude in abhorring dissent. Opus Dei is openly concerned with the economic self-interest of “friends” who already have superfluous wealth and power often at the expense of the economically less powerful.

Movement Conservatives

It is no accident that Opus Dei’s allies in advocating a smaller, more orthodox church are closely aligned with the U.S. Right. For example, William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, is an adjunct scholar with the Heritage Foundation. Pizza-franchise magnate Tom Monaghan regularly bankrolls the laissez-faire-oriented Acton Institute as well as orthodox Roman Catholic GOP candidates for public office. Catholic neoconservatives Michael Novak and the late Richard John Neuhaus were among the founders of the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD), where McCloskey has served as an advisor.

This is significant because, as Frederick Clarkson wrote in *The Public Eye*, IRD brings both rightwing politics and conservative theology to mainline Protestant denominations. It has always “intended to divide and conquer—and diminish the capacity of churches to carry forward their idea of a just society in the United States—and the world.”¹¹ In this way, Roman Catholic elements involved in IRD not only sought to hobble the major Protestant churches which had become more politically and socially liberal during the 20th century, but also to divide what they saw as their main competitors for influence and the direction of the culture.

The role of McCloskey and other prominent conservative Catholics in this anti-liberal Protestant agency deeply troubled the late Reverend Dr. Andrew Weaver, a prominent Methodist writer, who called it “the most grievous breach in ecumenical good will between Roman Catholics and Protestants since the changes initiated by Vatican

II.”¹² Indeed, the agenda advanced and the tactics used by IRD and its allies against the mainline Protestant churches as detailed by Clarkson, Weaver, and others are also evident in the battles in Roman Catholicism, and involve some of the same fractious groups and individuals.

While fractious may fairly describe the activities of McCloskey and his ilk both religiously and politically, that may be a radical understatement.

McCloskey makes it quite clear that if the United States as we know it must be ripped apart in order to achieve his ideal world of orthodox Catholicism, so be it. For example, in his Church of 2030 manifesto,

**It is widely believed
that Pope John XXIII
had wanted to relax the
Catholic prohibition on
artificial birth control
in the 1960s.**

he refers to his fantasy of a new country called “the Regional States of North America,” a place where the separation of church and state and the freedom of conscience have been abolished:

[A] final short and *relatively bloodless conflict produced our Regional States of North America*. The outcome was by no means an ideal solution but it does allow Christians to live in states that recognize the natural law and divine Revelation, the right of free practice of religion, and laws on marriage, family, and life that reflect the primacy of our Faith. With time and the reality of the ever-decreasing population of the states that worship at the altar of “the culture of death,” perhaps we will be able

to reunite and fulfill the Founding Fathers of the old United States dream to be “a shining city on a hill.” [Emphasis added]

Garry Wills observed of such revisionist history that what McCloskey is doing here is trying to sell the Founders as “proto-Catholics.” Wills further observed in his recent book *Head and Heart: American Christianities*, that John Courtney Murray’s idea “that America was really founded on Catholic principles... would have made Adams and Jefferson snort with derision.”¹³ Adams and Jefferson would find much to snort about because such views are not the exception but are increasingly the rule on the Catholic Right.

Common Ground or War?

Bishop Robert Finn, head of the Kansas City-St. Joseph diocese—and like McCloskey a member of Opus Dei—recently described Catholicism as “the Church militant” and told his audience, “We are at war.”¹⁴ The occasion was an address to proliferators at the 2009 Gospel of Life Convention held in Overland Park, Kansas. His speech was marked by a view that most Americans would find hard to believe were uttered by an American Church leader of the 21st century:

The more dangerous “human enemies” in our battle are those who in this age of pluralism and political propriety seek ways to convince us of their sincerity and good will. ...

They may propose *tolerance* and seem to have a *live and let live* approach to all human choices—even if the choice is not to *let live*, but actually to *let die*, or *let life be destroyed*. These more subtle enemies are of all backgrounds. They may be atheists or agnostics, or of any religion, including Christian or Catholic.

He went on to denounce those religious liberals, including President Obama, who have sought to identify “common ground” between anti-abortion and pro-choice camps:

This dissension in our own ranks should not surprise us because we all experience some dissension against God's law of love within our own heart. But the "battle between believers," who claim a certain "common ground" with us, while at the same time, attacking the most fundamental tenets of the Church's teachings, or disavowing the natural law—this opposition is one of the most discouraging, confusing, and dangerous.

Finn then directly opened up on Notre Dame University president John I. Jenkins who had invited President Obama, to give the 2009 commencement address:

I suspect that, since Notre Dame will need a scapegoat for this debacle, and Fr. Jenkins will probably lose his job, at this point perhaps he ought to determine to lose it for doing something right instead of something wrong. He ought to disinvite the President, who I believe would graciously accept the decision. Notre Dame, instead, ought to give the honorary degree to Bishop John D'Arcy of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, who has supported and tried to guide the University, despite their too frequent waywardness, faithfully for 25 years.

This is nothing short of separatist language aimed at taking over the entire institution. It reflects a certitude and arrogance on a par with the great American preacher Jonathon Edwards, whose 1741 diatribe "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God" defends, in the midst of a complex religious revival he helped spur, the Puritan notion of God's elect. Like 18th century Puritans, today's Roman Catholics who see themselves as fundamental, pure, and elect for salvation seek separation from those they see as disobedient via their independent thought.

Springtime for Traditionalism

How, we may ask, would such a Catholic schism affect American Christianity? A Protestant friend, Reverend

Dan Schultz,¹⁵ provided a sober assessment.

"If it comes to schism," Schultz explained, "Mother Church is going to lose a whole lot more than it gains. It needs Americans to fund its work in Africa and elsewhere." The clear-thinking United Church of Christ minister added, "A purge will no doubt strengthen the Episcopalians, Lutherans, perhaps the UCC and unfortunately, the already-swelling ranks of the non-religious."

If Schultz is correct, liberals might be tempted to celebrate the possible renewal and refreshing of mainline Protestantism. But consider the political implications: The Catholic Church with its global reach and moral authority would be run by those who would put aside social justice principles and replace them with a greater emphasis upon buccaneer-style laissez-faire economics, (not to mention such a radical opposition to birth control that they oppose condom distribution and HIV education in areas afflicted with AIDS). The effect on the poor and disenfranchised would be devastating.

But what specific type of rightist policies would such a Church pursue? That may depend upon the lay leaders involved in the schism. I will explore the roles of paleo-conservatives and neoconservatives in this fight, their respective agendas, as well as their movers and shakers, in part two. ■

End Notes

¹ R. Scott Appleby, "A Leaner, Smaller, Purer Church? Catholicism expert says the new Pope will likely keep enforcing orthodoxy, leading to possible 'winnowing' in the U.S. Church," *Business Week*, May 2, 2005. http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_18/b3931074_mz054.htm

² Ronald A. Simkins and William L. Blizek, "Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, Sectarian Catholicism and Mel Gibson," *Journal of Religion & Society*, <http://moses.creighton.edu/JRS/2004/2004-6.html>

³ John Davis, "Church's international contours changed under Pope John Paul II," *Catholic News Service*, <http://www.catholicnews.com/jpi/stories/story19.htm>

⁴ Michael Paulson, "Number of N.E. Catholics tumbles," *The Boston Globe*, March 9, 2009. The article finds that the American Catholic population is stabilized due to increased Hispanic immigration in the U.S. Southwest. Still, the trend is clear: in the Northeast a Catholic identification among the descendents of European Catholic immigrants is declining for a variety of reasons. It should not be lost that this group is presently better educated and economically better off (generally) than their Hispanic co-religionists.

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⁶ Rachel Donadio, "Pope Reinstates Four Excommunicated Bishops," *The New York Times*, World, January 24, 2009.

⁷ The Rev. Brian Jordan, "Latin Mass is all Greek to most worshippers," *Daily News*, Opinion, July 12, 2007.

⁸ Chris Suellentrop, "The Rev. John McCloskey: The Catholic Church's K Street Lobbyist," *Slate*, <http://slate.msn.com/?id=2069194>

⁹ Rev. John McCloskey, "2030: Looking Backwards," *CatholiCity: The Catholic Church Simplified*, <http://www.catholicity.com/mccloskey/2030.html>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Frederick Clarkson, "The Battle for the Mainline Churches," *The Public Eye Magazine*, Spring 2006 (20), no.1 (2006).

¹² Andrew Weaver, "Neocon Catholics target mainline Protestants: Institute on Religion and Democracy leads serious breach of ecumenical good will," *Media Transparency*, <http://mediatransparency.com/story.php?storyID=142>

¹³ John Courtney Murray was a Jesuit priest who wrote both before and during Vatican II on the similarities of Catholic notions of natural law as well as those of the Founding Fathers. Murray attempted to reconcile Catholicism with democracy and was in fact influential on the Council's pronouncements on religious freedom. To understand where Murray erred on the similarities see my article in the Summer 2008 issue of *The Public Eye* magazine, "How Roman Catholic Neocons Peddle Natural Law into Debates about Life and Death." http://www.publiceye.org/magazine/v23n2/how_roman_catholic_neocons.html

¹⁴ Bishop Robert W. Finn, "Kansas City Bishop to pro-lifers: 'We are at war!'" *National Catholic Reporter*, Faith & Parish, April 28, 2009.

¹⁵ The proprietor of the influential blog Street Prophets, and author of the forthcoming book *Changing The Script: An Authentically Faithful and Authentically Progressive Political Theology for the 21st Century*.

¹⁶ Rev. John McCloskey, "2030: Looking Backwards," *CatholiCity: The Catholic Church Simplified*, <http://www.catholicity.com/mccloskey/2030.html> McCloskey's article reveals his plan to add more congregants by combining the practice of birth control by non-Catholics with the fertility of the more obediently inclined futurist faithful. To that end he writes, "You will also note that as a group they are averaging four to five children per family, which means that over the next few decades we will see an increasing natural growth. Given that modern pagan society has achieved its goal of zero population growth and more, the demographics are on our side. Ironically in this year 2030 we are only 10 % of the population, but it is a rock solid fulcrum of which Archimedes would be proud. Upon that fulcrum we can transform the world if we stay the course."

¹⁷ Robert McClory, *Turning Point: The Inside Story of the Papal Birth Control Commission, and How Humanae Vitae Changed the Life of Patty Crowley and the Future of the Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1995). Sixty-five members voted for a change in Church teaching while four theologian priests dissented with one cardinal and two bishops voted not to change the belief that artificial birth control was evil.

¹⁸ Thomas Cahill, *Pope John XXIII* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 221.

Book Review

War as Metaphor

At War With Metaphor: Media, Propaganda, and Racism In The War On Terror

By Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills

Lexington Books, 2008, 268 pages, \$70.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Josh Klein

How was the Bush Administration able to win support for its war in Iraq when its official reasons for war were so empty? In this thoughtful, scholarly reflection, Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills look to the virulent metaphors that framed public discussion of the war's objects, enemies, and essential terms to answer this question, arguing, in short, that metaphors have power.

This is especially true when the mainstream media acts "as a stenographer to power, 'spin[ning]' even horrific acts of brutality, and characterize[ing] opposition as disloyalty. ... The mainstream news media bears the blame for boiling the blood and narrowing the mind of so many." (p. vii)

Age-old tropes like orientalism swirled in the mouths of politicians and media as they presented the Arab enemy as a mysterious and alien Other, only one step from the warriors' own dehumanization of their opponents. As the authors point out, the media constantly recirculates images and language that reinforce the characterization of Muslims as being fundamentally alien, zealous, and fanatical. Influential writer Bernard Lewis answered an interviewer by saying there is nothing to do about the problems with Muslims, "They are just the way they are. They're just going to hate us and go after us." (p. 30) Drawing links between dehumanizing stereotypes and dehumanizing practices, the authors track dehumanization in the print media's use of animal metaphors, cartoonists' lust for extermination, and talk radio. Rat and rodent imagery were rife. Headlines include: "Exhausted Saddam Snared," and "As British Close In On Basra, Iraqis Scurry Away." (p. 73) Monster was another popular word: "Arab World Created This Suicidal Monster," "The Terrorism Mon-

ster," "Revolving-Door Monsters." (p. 75)

The military's horrifying willingness to kill civilians is echoed by media commentators and columnists, as when Ben Shapiro, on *TownHall.com*, says he does not care about civilian casualties, and that "One American soldier is worth far more than an Afghan civilian." (p. 21) An effect of this is also seen in a survey of U.S. soldiers and marines, only half of whom said they would report a member of their unit for killing or injuring a non-combatant. (p. 20) More interestingly, the authors find the powers

that be linked terrorism to infestation, corruption, and decay — all ideas with religious resonance for those listening for the apocalypse.

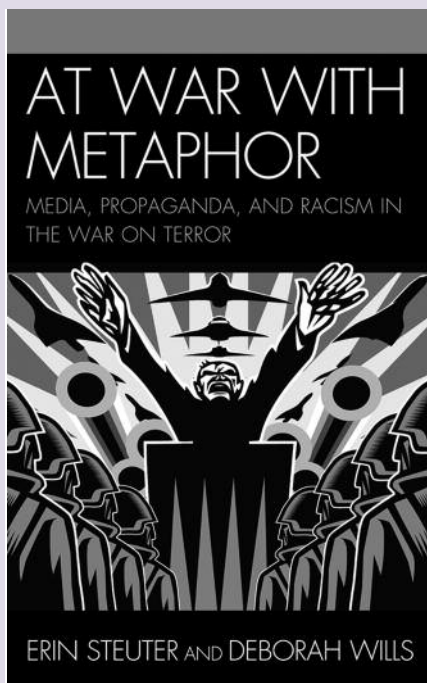
The book certainly documents racism and chauvinism in war on terror culture. It is a clear analysis of the role of metaphor in propaganda and a good example of the cultural/discursive analysis that is currently fashionable in academic research. Other strengths of the book are its exploration of how many types of media support militarism and gung ho politics.

But the book's weakness is that it offers an unsatisfying analysis of the political and economic interests that drive propaganda. It is troubling that, as with many similar works, the authors offer limited acknowledgement of the political economy and the social (as opposed to cultural) forces behind

racism, the war on terror, and war.

The limits of the authors' approach are glaring in their weak suggestions about how to change this state of affairs: "We might insist on new metaphors..." and ask, "what would happen if we disbanded our metaphoric army." (p. 209) Fine suggestion, but mentioning the need to disband real armies would strengthen the book's policy suggestions.

Their explanation of the sources of racism and war promotion in the media is similarly tepid: "Those who own and operate the mainstream media in the United States often have connections to corporate or military power that can result in conflicting interests." (p. 168) "Often" have connections? "Can" result in "conflicting" interests? This careful language makes media and cultural militarism sound like an occasional problem, minimizing the stark institutional challenge we face. Further, the book



Josh Klein is a sociologist at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. He currently is researching the culture of political violence and state-corporate crime.

leaves you curious about those who were immune to the lure of propaganda and how the authors would account for them in their focus on discourse. How do people become grounded in oppositional or humanist thinking and institutions so they see propaganda for what it is?

I do not want to sound unduly harsh in my criticisms of the book. *At War With Metaphor* is full of useful critical insights and shameful facts and quotes—valuable stuff. As an assessment of war on terror ideology, this book is terribly important for policy analysts, activists, and social scientists—especially if accompanied by a clear-eyed analysis of more material forces driving war. ■

Following the Leaps and Bounds of Anti-Gay Logic

Fish Out of Water

Directed by Ky Dickens

Documentary by Yellow Wing Productions, 2008, <http://www.fishoutofwaterfilm.com/>

Reviewed by Jaime Coyne

Inspired by the director's devastating experience of coming out to her sorority sisters at Vanderbilt University, this documentary examines the seven Bible verses often cited by the Christian anti-gay movement. Some people spout that being gay is wrong because "it's in the Bible," but few of those asked off the streets in this documentary knew what the Bible said on the topic.

By unpacking these verses with the help of progressive Christian theologians like Bishop John Shelby Spong and Dr. Amy Jill Levine and lively cartoon animation, the film reveals how the Bible is used to further many motives at odds with the Christian creed to love all of God's children. This film engages in religious debate as political act, arguing religion with people to win them over, and offers support to those who are gay and Christian.

We hear from those condemned to hell by their own families, and two Christian Right leaders who use these seven verses

as proof that the Bible says homosexuality is sin. And we hear from many more who disagree with them.

The first verse chronologically is Genesis 1:1-31, in which God commands humankind in a newly formed world to "be fruitful and multiply," leading some Christians to condemn homosexuality as sinful because it does not lead to reproduction. As many have pointed out, under this logic plenty of other people are also sinful—the elderly, the infertile, the sterile, postmenopausal women, people using birth control.

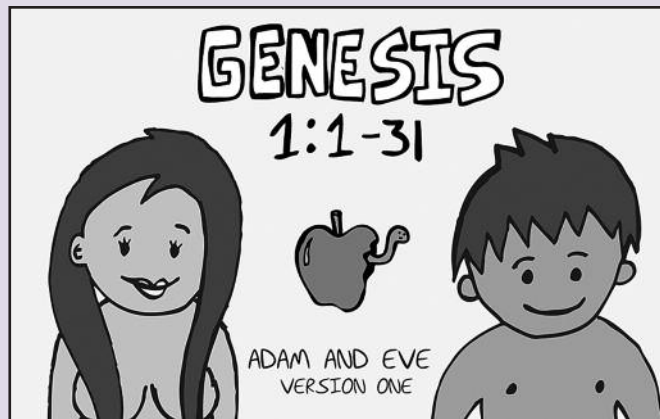
The filmmaker also unpacks Genesis 2-3, in which God gives Eve to Adam to be his "helper." This is given as proof that God meant relationships to be between one man and one woman. But the "corresponding helper" can be viewed as the individual

who is most suited for that person, rather than just a subservient companion. Nowhere does it say that a person's partner must be of the opposite sex.

People popularly read the story of God destroying Sodom and Gomorrah (in Genesis 19:1-29) as revealing God's wrath because the cities were filled with people doing perverse, often homosexual acts. The very word "sodomy" comes from it. Yet, our re-interpreters tell us, reading

the story more broadly reveals different lessons. God punishes the cities because its citizens show no hospitality to their visitors and threaten violence to the one family who does welcome strangers. Yes, the citizens threaten the family and its guests with homosexual rape—yet it is a violent atrocity because it would be by force.

The film reminds us that Jesus—the heart of the Christian belief system—never said a word about homosexuality. He did, however, forgive the prostitutes and adulterers, and eat with the sinners. He concerned himself with the reality of the everyday life of the common person. As one woman passionately told the filmmaker, "Jesus cares about our hearts. Jesus doesn't care about our homosexuality." ■



From Fish Out of Water

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EDITORIAL *cont'd from page 1*

way style. Just this year, in its effort to stop labor law reform in its tracks, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce rolled out claims that unions hurt the economy—when any reputable economist will tell you that enlarging workers' buying power is just what our struggling economy needs right now. No matter. We are talking about spin. And no, making unionization easier won't harm small businesses, no matter what you saw on TV in ads funded, ironically, by *big business* dollars.

Despite its investment in misinformation, in fact the Right does not need to change many minds. All the Right needs to do to keep their power is to prevent change. And all aspects of the Right, from corporate honchos to anti-abortion forces to tea party libertarians, have embraced a politics of disruption. *Public Eye* has tracked that politics of disruption in the mainline churches, reproductive health clinics, and



the United Nations. And now that the Right no longer controls the halls of Congress, that politics of disruption, so well honed elsewhere, has found a new home in the town meetings and on Capitol Hill. It will take an enormous mobilization from the center and left to overcome that politics, a huge challenge if the center and left cannot agree on what they are fighting for.

— Abby Scher

To the Editor,

PRA's favorable review of the book, *The Transparent Cabal* (Summer 2009) leaves me to wonder if Israel would be so critiqued if it were a Christian country rather than a Jewish? After all, one does not need to be a Jew or a Christian Zionist to conclude the Israel is the only democratic country in the Middle East. It served America's strategic needs during the Cold War. And its scientific community has contributed mightily to America's needs. What other country in the Middle East meets those qualities?

N. Meyerson

Michelle Goldberg responds: I'm more than a bit baffled by Mr. Meyerson's reading of my review of *The Transparent Cabal* as positive. When I called it "an almost textbook illustration of the way far Left anti-Zionism and far Right antisemitism can bend towards each other and begin to overlap," I didn't mean it as a compliment.

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.....Reports in Review.....

REPORT OF THE MONTH

A Look into the “Queer Asian” Community

Queer Asian Compass: A Descriptive Directory of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBTQ) Asian American, South Asian, and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Organizations

By the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance, July 2009.
http://www.lgbtfunders.org/files/NQAPIA_Compas_Directory.pdf

“Queer Asians” are a minority within minorities. As this report explains, “LGBTQ individuals are invisible in mainstream AAPI communities, and AAPI individuals are marginalized in mainstream gay communities.” By surveying 34 queer AAPI organizations about their composition and work, this network makes a vitally important contribution to both the groups and their potential funders.

Two-thirds of the groups are multigender, a decided shift from uni-sex groups of previous years. Few have paid staff. Only three have youth programs. Just under half are unincorporated, without nonprofit tax status, which is a severe limitation for building out the infrastructure

of the movement. Groups are centered on the East and West coasts, with West Coast groups largely native born and East Coast groups reporting to be two-thirds immigrant. Only one third have non-English language materials.

The organizations provide social and service networks for people coming out, and also support asylum seekers with letters to immigration officers. Some members were reportedly professionals in their home country who overstayed tourist visas to stay here.

Many of the organizations reported needing greater leadership. Often potential leaders are reluctant to step forward in case their visibility puts jobs or citizenship in jeopardy. Another issue is that the native born LGBTQ community has not reached out to non-English speaking Americans, including AAPIers, creating a rift of ignorance between the two groups. The groups surveyed also generally reported tension in balancing social and political activities. Yet the report reveals a need for a more comprehensive campaign for immigrant rights.

—Jaime Coyne

Other Reports in Review

Changing the World of Women and Girls

Equality for Women: Where do we stand on Millennium Development Goal 3?

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, Washington D.C., 2008

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/EqualityforWomenfinal.pdf>

Starting from an understanding that that gender inequality is both unfair and economically inefficient, the authors examine whether and how countries are funding and pursuing improvements in women’s status and labor force participation. Gender equality is Millennium Development Goal 3 that emerged from the international community’s Millennium Declaration in 2000, and this 350-page “midterm” report evaluates progress toward “a world in which women and men work together as equal partners to build better lives.”

Concretely, the goals include increasing gender equality in education, the ratio of literate females to males, the percentage of women in wage employment in the nonagri-

cultural sector, and the proportion of women working in national governments.

Eighty-two of 122 countries achieved the official midterm target of equality in primary and secondary education, but 19 countries, including 13 in Sub-Saharan Africa, are unlikely to reach this aim even by 2015. Girls from tribal, ethnic or linguistic minority groups are the most disadvantaged in achieving gender equality.

To explain the sharp differences in labor force participation rates among countries, the authors examine the link between economic development and social barriers. “In poor countries, female participation is high and women are concentrated in farm employment or family enterprises. Increases in incomes move women out of the labor force, both because of income effects and because of social barriers to women working for pay. At high levels of development, women begin to move into white collar employment as their education levels rise.”

One key indicator that the authors acknowledge is missing from the study is women’s access to reproductive and general healthcare, and an analysis of how that influ-

ences their access to education and the paid labor force. This is an important gap that limits their policy suggestions.

Beyond changing laws, institutions and policies, the authors emphasize the “need to change cultural norms, traditions and day to day practice,” suggesting that governments offer families financial incentives to change their behavior towards girls.

—Maya Burns

David Horowitz: Slanting the Facts about Education

Facts Still Count: An Analysis of David Horowitz’s One-Party Classroom

By Free Exchange on Campus http://www.free-exchangeoncampus.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=43&Itemid=25

David Horowitz claims in *One-Party Classroom* that only liberal ideas are taught in college classrooms—generally by incompetent professors with ulterior motives that are evident in their course syllabi. This report debunks Horowitz’s arguments by exposing how he omits and changes data, takes infor-

mation out of context, or is just plain wrong.

“Much of *One-Party Classroom* is the equivalent of researching a dissertation in chemistry using a 19th-century alchemy textbook as source material—and then misquoting it,” write the authors. To start with, he looks only at selected courses at 12 elite universities that posted syllabi online, and then misuses what he finds. In his allegations against University of California Santa Cruz professor Bruce Larkin, for example, Horowitz uses an outdated edition of the course syllabus and misquotes it to make a statement about Iraq into an entirely different statement about al-Qaeda.

Horowitz loves looking at course reading lists. But he neglects to mention books on the lists that would display diverse perspectives. Horowitz slams University of Southern California professor Douglas Becker for teaching a course using three “leftist propaganda” texts, but forgets to mention four other course texts from differing perspectives.

In questioning a faculty members’ teaching abilities, he doesn’t seem to do even cursory research into the person’s experience. For instance, he criticizes University of Missouri at Columbia sociologist Srirupa Prasad for teaching a course on women’s health without any knowledge of medicine. In fact, Prasad had published four articles related to public health and once taught in the University of Wisconsin’s Department of Medical History and Bioethics.

—Jaime Coyne

An Unequal Recession

Race and Recession: How Inequity Rigged the Economy and How to Change the Rules

Applied Research Center, Oakland, Calif., May 2009.

http://arc.org/downloads/2009_race_recession.pdf

This report tracks the stories of two dozen people of color from ten states and uses supporting data to illustrate patterns of racial inequality within the current economic crisis. The strength of this report is in looking at historical inequity to understand how people of color are experiencing the economy now.

Even before the latest downturn, the unemployment rate for people of color was higher than that of Whites. For this reason, Blacks

are said to face a “permanent recession.” In 2008, 16.3% of Blacks and 15.2% of Latinos, but only 8.7% of whites, were underemployed, meaning they are working but are forced into part-time jobs because full-time work is not available.

To reveal discriminatory hiring, the report follows the story of Tanya Alina, who reported that an employee warned her she wouldn’t be hired by the boss because he was looking for “young, white, eye-candy girls.” Criminal records are a huge impediment to employment for all races but especially for Blacks. “Being black in America today is just about the same as having a felony conviction in terms of one’s chances of finding a job,” the report argues.

Companies marketed the subprime loans that caused such economic upheaval to people of color who otherwise would be eligible for prime rate loans, one part of a long history of discrimination in housing. These loans start with a few lower interest payments and then escalate to high payments that many people cannot make, leading to foreclosure. In the case of a Mrs. Mallory, a 63-year-old Black woman, her payments jumped from \$500 to \$1600 a month after six payments, an amount impossible on her \$960 a month income.

Among the report’s recommendations: use Racial Equity Impact Statements during policymaking, raise the minimum wage, create universal healthcare, and bar criminal records questions from job applications.

—Jaime Coyne

Getting Ahead with the Green Economy

Job Opportunities for the Green Economy: A State by State Picture of Occupations that Gain from Green Investments

By Robert Pollin and Jeannette Wicks-Lim, Political Economy Research Institute, Amherst, Mass., June 2008. http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other_publication_types/Green_Jobs_PERI.pdf

Last issue we reviewed a report warning that green jobs don’t necessarily pay high wages. This 12-state study identifies just which relatively high-paying jobs would grow if we challenged global warming by investing in: retrofitting buildings to be more environmentally sound, mass transit, energy-effi-

cient automobiles, wind power, solar power, and cellulosic biomass fuels.

The answers are not always what you’d expect. The report estimates there are currently more than 500,000 jobs called “production helpers.” These are not the inventors or designers, but the individuals who do much of the paperwork and processing necessary to produce the technology. PERI argues these jobs will likely become much more complex, resulting in specialization and, more jobs, as well as higher wages. Even industrial truck drivers will be in higher demand, with over 1.7 million employed in the states studied, earning roughly \$12-\$14 per hour, as will be needed to transport materials for different green projects throughout the country. Indeed, most growth would be in existing job types.

—Kris Coombs

Human Rights at Home

The Power of Justice: Applying International Human Rights Standards to American Domestic Practices

By William Schulz, Center for American Progress, Washington, D.C., June 2009.

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/pdf/humanrights.pdf>

This report tries to explain why progressives have not fully embraced a “human rights” framework, and how doing so would further their domestic campaigns. It argues that one major reason for this is the failure of the UN Human Rights Commission and Amnesty International to support and recognize African American freedom struggles in the 1960s. The UNHRC thought that critiquing U.S. policy towards African Americans constituted a breach of member-state sovereignty, while Amnesty International focused primarily on “traditional political rights, such as the ‘freedom of belief.’” Reframing domestic “civil rights” as international “human rights,” Schulz contends, can provide new avenues for progressives to advance their agenda. And respecting international standards domestically would further American foreign policy goals by insulating it from charges of hypocrisy. For example, discriminatory practices towards Muslims make “it easier for Al-Qaeda to characterize the United States’ response to terrorism as a ‘war on Islam.’”

—Stas Moroz

Eyes RIGHT

WHAT WOMEN WANT

Concerned Women for America staffer Janice Crouse puts a conservative Christian spin on secular statistics from the Economic Bureau of Research suggesting women are less happy than they used to be. Without Christian faith, and being in the home where they can devote more time to worship and being close to God, women won't be happy, she explains. "Women don't have the social cohesion they used to have," says Crouse, continuing "Stay at home moms who might have the opportunity to grow personally by learning new skills, whether its home repair type of things, or home based businesses and things" no longer have these opportunities when they enter the paid workforce. An interesting argument from a working woman!

"Goodbye Happy Girl; Decline of Female Happiness," Concerned Women for America, <http://www.cwfa.org/articles/17355/BLI/commentary/index.htm>

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WE [WHITES] BUILT THIS COUNTRY

JULY 17

In case you somehow missed it, TV host Rachel Maddow asked Pat Buchanan why, in his opinion, 108 of the 110 Supreme Court justices have been white. His response? "White men were 100% of the people who wrote the Constitution, 100% of the people who signed the Declaration of Independence, 100% of the people who died at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, probably close to 100% of the people who died at Normandy. This has been a country built, basically, by white folks in this country, who are [sic] 90% of the entire nation, in 1960 when I was growing up, Rachel, and the other 10% were African Americans who had been discriminated against. That's why." Oh, thanks.

Jason Linkins, "Rachel Maddow Takes On Pat Buchanan: 'You're Playing With Fire... You're Living In The 1950s,'" Huffington Post, July 17, 2009. http://www.buffingtonpost.com/2009/07/17/rachel-maddow-takes-on-pa_n_237146.html

WALMART: TOO ACCEPTING OF MUSLIMS

The mega retailer Walmart is an "apologist[s] for Islamofascism," charges right-wing pundit Debbie Schlusel. Last year she made that charge after a Dearborn store selling halal meat agreed not to undercut the prices of local halal butcher shops and made donations to Muslim charities. This time, she tars a Minnesota Walmart for letting Muslim employees pray on the premises. Schlusel scoffs, "It's not a shocker. Wal-Mart is Wal-Mosque," and she's got a mock television advertisement for Wal-Mosque to prove it.

"Why is Anyone Surprised WalMart Caved to Muslims... Again?" Debbieschlusel.com, July 21, 2009. <http://www.debbieschlusel.com/5436/why-is-anyone-surprised-that-wal-mart-caved-to-muslims-again/>

KLAN MEMBER ARRESTED HIDING IN ISRAEL

Micky Louis Mayon, an alleged KKK member, was on the FBI's most wanted list for

crimes like torching federal judges' cars, so he tried to get away by moving to Israel. After living there for several months, he impregnated his Jewish girlfriend, revealed his criminal background to her, and was arrested after the woman reported him to authorities. Ironically, he was nabbed by a new intelligence task force searching out illegal aliens that he would probably champion were it in the United States.

Source: "FBI's wanted man says his Jewish girlfriend is pregnant" YNet News, July 14, 2009. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3746686,00.html>

Eye LASHES

“Neither President Obama nor the Democratic-controlled Congress seems to care for children. They favor killing them in the womb and making taxpayers fund their execution. For those who see the light of day, they want to doom them to failing schools and give them free needles to inject illegal drugs into their veins.”

– Dean Mathew D. Staver, Liberty University School of Law, <http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/8986011015.html>

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