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Theocracy Alert

Democracy perverted, justice denied: The unholy march toward theocracy

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April 18, 2005—On April 5, Kansas became the eighteenth state to amend its constitution to deny gay citizens their civil right to a civil marriage.

The evangelical Christian Right chirped with [glee](#) and [bravado](#): a 70 percent vote in favor of [discrimination](#), 550,000 voters expressed their [bigotry](#). What the evangelical Christian Right neglected to say was that, according to October 2004 official [figures](#), there were 1,687,896 registered voters in the Bible Belt state of Kansas. In other words, less than one-third of eligible voters (32.6 percent) were able to legislate discrimination in the Sunflower State.

The evangelical Christian Right has built a powerful “grassroots” political organization skilled in using fear tactics—“Gays and lesbians will destroy this country with their lifestyle. Don’t let this world be ruled by gays.”—and faith-based [fanaticism](#) to bring out the vote. They can, in a very real sense, “control” elections. In her April 11 [story](#) for the Christian news service, AgapePress, Allie Martin acknowledged that “the grassroots effort to pass the [Kansas] amendment was spearheaded by the Christian activist group [One Voice of Kansas](#).”

Despite the Republican politicians [already in their pocket](#) and the fact that, according to an April 14 article, [Conservatives near lock on US courts](#), in The Christian Science Monitor, “Republican appointees now constitute a majority of judges on 10 of the nation’s 13 federal appeals courts. As few as three more lifetime appointments on key courts would tip the balance in favor of GOP appointees on all but one appeals court—the Ninth US Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco”—the evangelical Christian Right seems to be using their “traditional values” of lies, scare tactics and hate-mongering to rally the flock. [See [“Lying and Hate Are Not ‘Traditional Values’ \(except for the evangelical Christian Right\).”](#)]

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist provides a stellar example of those faith-based, politically motivated “traditional values.”

According to an April 15, [story](#) in The New York Times, Frist will “join a handful of prominent Christian conservatives in a telecast portraying Democrats as ‘against people of faith’ for blocking President Bush’s [judicial] nominees.” The April 24 event is being called “Justice Sunday” and comes replete with flyers depicting “a young man holding a Bible in one hand and a gavel in the other.” Under the heading “the filibuster against people of faith,” the flyer reads: “The filibuster was once abused to protect racial bias, and it is now being used against people of faith.”

No, senator, it’s being used to prevent demagogues from transforming the last independent branch of government into another weapon for the evangelical Christian Right to use in its unholy war to make America a theocracy.

Such lies, distortions and deception are extraordinary, even for a faith-based politician like Frist. Does their use indicate that the leaders of the evangelical Christian Right and their political minions are running

scared, knowing that an independent judiciary would thwart their theocratic plans? Or are they just drunk with power?

Both, probably. And that makes them all the more dangerous. It also helps account for their audacious [assault](#) on the judiciary. The evangelical Christian Right already has the White House. Politicians indebted to and using them—the symbiosis is indeed deadly—dominate both houses of Congress. The only branch of government still not under their control is the judiciary. It's also the only independent branch of government that could thwart their plans to [theocratize America](#). Hence the fanatical campaigns to remake the judiciary “in their own image” and by *any* means necessary.

On March 29, Rev. Louis Sheldon and his Traditional Values Coalition launched a \$10 million [campaign](#) against “the anti-God Left” who, they claim, have “been using America’s courts to impose an anti-religion, anti-family agenda on America.”

On April 4, James Dobson and his Focus on the Family (FOF) launched their own [campaign](#) against the judiciary. FOF is also selling a [CD](#) by Phyllis Schlafly on “stopping judicial tyranny.” But those were only the opening salvos.

On April 7 and 8, a conference was held in Washington, D.C. Its title was “[Confronting the Judicial War on Faith](#).” According to a Los Angeles Times [story](#), “Its sponsor was the Traditional Values Coalition, social-issue reactionaries who back legislation to restrict federal courts from ruling on anything involving God . . . Its so-called [Constitution Restoration Act](#) is sponsored in Congress by Senators. Richard C. Shelby (R-Ala.), Zell Miller (D-Ga.), Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), and Reps. Robert B. Aderholt (R-Ala.) and Mike Pence (R-Ind.).”

The Constitution Restoration Act would establish the legal basis for an American theocracy:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the Supreme Court shall not have jurisdiction to review, by appeal, writ of certiorari, or otherwise, any matter to the extent that relief is sought against an element of Federal, State, or local government, or against an officer of Federal, State, or local government (whether or not acting in official personal capacity), by reason of that element's or officer's acknowledgement of God as the sovereign source of law, liberty, or government.

Another major player in the war on an independent judiciary sponsored a major session at the conference. RightMarch.com was formed in March of 2003. The name says it all: “march” (or goose-step) to the fringe of the religious and political “right.” RightMarch.com identifies itself as “the ‘Rapid Response Force’ against the ongoing liberal onslaught.” A downloadable poster for the session they sponsored at the conference is on their [web site](#). It's as inflammatory and as misleading as one would expect. After all, the first victim in any war is “truth.”

The poster proclaims:

Activist Judges are:
UNDERMINING Democracy,
DEVASTATING families, and
ASSAULTING Judeo-Christian Morality.

and lists the speakers: “Tom DeLay, Sam Brownback, Chief Justice Roy Moore, former Vatican Ambassador Ray Flynn, [Alan Keyes](#), Phyllis Schlafly, Tony Perkins, Mike Farris, Howard Phillips, Bill Dannemeyer, Morton Blackwell, Bill Federer, Rick Scarborough, Don Feder, Kay Daly, Janet Folger, William Greene, Jan LaRue, Tim Lee and Patrick Reilly.” A veritable [Who's Who](#) in the campaign to make the United States a hate-based theocracy.

As for the three claims of what those “activist judges” are doing . . .

1. “Undermining democracy.” A true democracy can exist only if there are checks and balances to assure that one fanatical “grassroots” group doesn’t take over all branches of government. That’s the rationale for a “separation of powers”: a means to assure that current political (and religious) voting trends don’t compromise the equal civil rights of all citizens. In that sense, the political tactics of the evangelical Christian Right are historically familiar. Passing “grassroots” laws that abolished the separation of powers and damning certain groups of citizens were also the tactics Chancellor Hitler used to consolidate his regime’s power and legitimate its ideology.

History gives us a kind of chart, and we dare not surrender even a small rushlight in the darkness. The hasty reformer who does not remember the past will find himself condemned to repeat it. — John Buchan

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. . . . This is the condition of children and barbarians, in whom instinct has learned nothing from experience. —George Santayana

2. “Devastating families.” Yes. The evangelical Christian Right’s jihad has devastated [families](#), especially those including the 8 to 10 million children being reared in same-sex households and those whose personal, private decisions have been invaded and made fodder for political campaigns. The name “Terri Schiavo” comes immediately to mind. The name “Tom DeLay” also comes to mind as he continues to use the Schiavo tragedy to further his and the evangelical Christian Right’s campaign against an independent judiciary. As The New York Times [reported](#) on April 14, Tom DeLay has “stepped up his crusade against judges, announcing that he had instructed the Judiciary Committee to investigate federal court decisions in the Terri Schiavo case and to recommend possible legislation.” Another [report](#) acknowledged the wider scope of DeLay’s call for investigation and action against offending jurists: “He specifically called for the committee to probe rulings that were favorable to same-sex marriage and decisions in the Terri Schiavo [case]”

3. “Assaulting Judeo-Christian Morality.” A most confusing accusation. Judeo-Christian morality is what it is. Those who wish to subscribe are free to do so. What they are not—and should not be—free to do is transforms the courts into a faith-based judicial system. That’s functional theocracy, not effective democracy.

The conference was called “Confronting the Judicial War on Faith.” There is no “war on faith.” (But it does underwrite the strategy of making the victimizer the victim that the Catholic Church used so well at the height of its pedophile sex scandal.) So-called “[people of faith](#)” can have their faith. That’s a private matter. The public, political “war” is to force the beliefs of the most fanatical “people of faith” onto everyone by embedding them in the laws and packing the courts of a secular nation that once claimed to stand for “liberty and justice *for all*.” That traditional American value is not tenable in a theocracy. And *that’s* the point . . .

When the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts—that state where the American revolution began—issued its landmark decision, the evangelical Christian Right went bananas.

Unless the people of the State of Massachusetts rise up with one voice in opposition to this lawless and socially destructive behavior, it will destroy society as we know it.—Steve Crampton, Chief Counsel, Center for Law and Policy, American Family Association, December 2003

The fact that [the sky didn’t fall](#) and that “traditional marriage” in Massachusetts continues *totally* unaffected by same-sex marriage sticks in the craw of the evangelical Christian Right. And for good reason. It negates their propaganda and their arguments. That’s also why James Dobson tried so hard to influence Canadians through his radio and TV broadcasts, as well as his “[grassroots](#)” efforts to have Americans lobby Canadian legislators. With conclusive evidence from our Canadian neighbor that same-sex marriage does not destroy (or even affect) “traditional marriage,” “the family,” or anything else the evangelical Christian Right claims to be trying to protect, their arguments against marriage equality fall

flat, and the so-called “leaders” of the evangelical Christian Right are exposed as the lying, hypocritical, hate-mongering bigots they are.

Same-sex marriage has been legal for more than a year in Massachusetts. None—that’s *none*, as in *not one*—of the calamitous catastrophes predicted by the evangelical Christian Right has materialized. That is, no doubt, why they have [renewed](#) the [campaigns](#) to remove the justices of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court who upheld the constitutional guarantee of [equality](#) for all citizens. Such decisions are theocratically unacceptable. From the Christian “news” service, WorldNetDaily, [story](#):

A measure to oust the four justices who voted for same-sex marriage in Massachusetts will be considered today [April 12, 2005] by the state legislature's Joint Judiciary Committee.

As WorldNetDaily reported, the Massachusetts-based group [Article 8 Alliance](#) is promoting a "bill of address," a Massachusetts provision allowing lawmakers to remove judges who fail to fulfill their duties.

Apparently upholding state (and federal) constitutional guarantees of equality for all citizens is not among the duties of supreme courts, according to the evangelical Christian Right. They, the voters and the politicians they control want *real* “activist judges,” as [Cynthia Tucker](#) defined them: “‘activist judge’—a jurist who ignores the law and rules according to the passions of a group of partisans.”

A “Christian Underground” [article](#) on April 14, made that very clear. Following a meeting of so-called “Christian” leaders in New York, Bishop Harry Jackson, chairman of the High Impact Leadership Coalition, issued this threat: “We came together in New York City to send a strong message to elected officials and candidates for public office in New York and across America: vote against gay marriage, abortion and for other moral value issues or evangelical Christians throughout the U.S. will continue to vote you out of office.” One can almost hear the words of fanatical homophobe Randall Terry echoing in the background: “I want you to just let a wave of intolerance wash over you. I want you to let a wave of hatred wash over you. Yes, hate is good . . . Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a Biblical duty. We are called by God to conquer this country.”

A new attack strategy in the unholy war against jurists who base their decisions on the law instead of extremists’ agendas appeared in Joseph Farah’s April 13, 2005 WorldNet Daily (WND) [article](#), “Courts threatening national security.”

[WorldNet Daily](#) bills itself as “A Free Press for a Free People.” Joseph Farah is founder, editor and chief executive officer of WND. But neither WND or Farah advocates a “free people” or a “free press,” as Terry Krepel noted in a September 8, 2003, [article](#), “Exhibit 24: Joseph Farah, Crusher of Dissent.” Krepel began by asking “How can Joseph Farah top himself after advocating the murder of adulterers?” The answer attests to the goals, attitude and rhetoric of the evangelical Christian Right:

Set off by an article in which [actor] Johnny Depp allegedly called the United States a "dumb puppy that has big teeth" . . . Farah's reasoned reaction to Depp [was] "I say we should make certain this scumbucket never works in America again. . . . It's time to silence these people. It's time to force them to get real jobs and perform real work and learn the unusual and undeserved blessings America has bestowed upon them." Like the First Amendment right of free speech, perhaps?

Krepel was right. What Farah and WND are really interested in is damning, demonizing and “the complete muzzling of views” they disagree with. Muzzling the courts is the overt intention of the [Constitution Restoration Act](#).

The Heritage Foundation is a conservative think tank. In one of its recent lectures—number 871, delivered on February 17 and published on April 11, and available as a pdf download on their [website](#)—a similar theme was struck: “There were, and are, scholars and statesmen who believe that courts should not be granted the power to invalidate legislation in the name of the Constitution.”

Recall the words of The Constitution Restoration Act:

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“Acknowledgement of God as the sovereign source of law, liberty, or government”: Theocracy 101.

And, of course, “God” and His wishes will be defined by Louis Sheldon and James Dobson, George W. Bush and Tom DeLay.

The Constitution Restoration Act and similar pending legislation have the full backing of that evangelical paragon of [ethics](#), House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, who threatened political retribution against judges that do not conform to theocratic ideology. Suffice to say, fanatical Louis Sheldon [said](#) of fanatical Tom DeLay, “I consider Tom DeLay to be one of the most important Members of Congress. . . . He is committed to biblical morality and is a strong ally in the battle to save our nation from the failed ideas of liberals, judicial tyrants, and moral anarchists.” Apparently Sheldon’s and DeLay’s version of “biblical morality” does not include ethics or honesty, but it does encourage sinful slander and disgraceful name-calling.

On March 3, WND featured an [article](#) by Farah, entitled “Oh, Canada!” His main gripe was that “Prime Minister Paul Martin, a weak-minded, weak-kneed politician who vacillates with the slightest breeze of controversy, announced Canada would not join the U.S. missile defense program,” another boondoggle on the evangelical “Christian” Right’s bellicose faith-based agenda. Farah concluded his diatribe in the same gutter in which it began:

Canada is fortunate I am not in charge in Washington. My response to [Prime Minister Paul] Martin’s limp-wristed demand would be: “Fine, we’ll let you know about those incoming missiles. But since we, too, live in a sovereign nation governed by a free people encompassing many diverse cultures and viewpoints, we’ll set up a blue-ribbon, bipartisan committee to evaluate your ‘requests’ to shoot down those incoming missiles. Be sure to provide 24-hours notice of such requests.”

How typical Farah would use the “limp-wristed” homophobic slur. How typical Farah would pervert the phrase “a free people encompassing many diverse cultures,” when it is the expressed goal of the evangelical Christian Right, their political minions and their media outlets to entomb all Americans in a theocratic, homogeneous culture in which “justice” could be rained down like fire and brimstone on “homos,” non-Christians, non-Republicans and other “undesirables” . . . as they become identified.

And make no mistake about it. An unending supply of fresh “[undesirables](#)” will be needed to maintain the theocracy.

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