

Theocracy Alert

Injustice Sunday and 'equality tyrants'

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There's more than one way to skin a cat, and there's more than one way to take a black robe off the bench.—Tony Perkins, April 22, 2005

Congress can simply disenfranchise a court . . . All they have to do is say the Ninth Circuit doesn't exist anymore, and it's gone.—James Dobson, April 22, 2005

May 3, 2005—Fire and brimstone were called down upon anyone and everyone who objected to the evangelical Christian Right's attempt to control the judiciary. The April 24 event was called "Justice Sunday: Stop the Filibuster Against People of Faith." The 90-minute simulcast from the Highview Baptist mega-church in Louisville, Kentucky, featured rants, raves and bellicose threats from evangelical "Christian" leaders [Tony Perkins](#), president of Family Research Council, and [James Dobson](#), founder and chairman of Focus on the Family.

It was truly Kafkaesque and the clearest demonstration yet that the goal of the evangelical Christian Right's leaders is to set themselves up as the star chamber pulling *all* the strings in an American theocracy. Their "do as we say, or else . . ." rhetoric made that abundantly clear.

When trying to assure the enemies of righteousness that he wasn't advocating a theocracy with himself in charge, Dobson said, "Folks, you can't make somebody else's dog do what you want it to do." And what do "folks" like Dr. Dobson do to a disobedient or offending "dog?" The child psychologist began his career writing "Christian" guides for parents. Dobson advocated spanking: physical violence inflicted on a loved one in the name of "Christian love." Can those who don't share his megalomaniac vision expect any less?

Mr. Perkins believes jurists in an independent judiciary pose "a greater threat to representative government [than] terrorist groups." No, Mr. Perkins, they don't. But you and your buddies do.

Bill Donahue of the Catholic League asked, "What are we, the Taliban?" Yes, Mr. Donahue, you and your buddies are indeed the American Taliban, and thank you for making that clearer than ever.

Prominent Southern evangelical leader Rev. Albert Mohler confirmed the theocrats' delusion of grandeur: "We're going to save this civilization and uphold righteousness," as "righteousness" is defined by the star chamber . . . just as it was by the Taliban.

And who are some of the judicial nominees and politicians that would uphold injustice and obediently serve the evangelical star chamber? Charles W. Pickering, Sr., of Mississippi is one of them. According to Peter Wallsten's [report](#) in the LA Times, Pickering's "nomination to the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals was blocked by Democrats after it was revealed that he secretly had pressed prosecutors to allow a lesser sentence for a white man who led a cross-burning at a black couple's home." And, as Mr. Wallsten accurately noted, "circumventing the confirmation process, Bush appointed Pickering to the bench during a congressional recess." He didn't last though, as noted in a December 9, 2004 AP story: "Federal judge Charles Pickering, appointed by President Bush less than a year ago without congressional approval,

said Wednesday he will step down from the bench.” Now, he’s back again campaigning for a seat on the federal bench, and still with crosses burning.

Moreover, the fact that Judge Pickering performed on-stage at the Justice Sunday Show should immediately and unequivocally disqualify him from any judicial post.

[William Pryor](#)—another Bush re-nominee—is a man whose overt, faith-based hatred for gay Americans makes him a poster boy for the Dobson-Perkins theocratic star chamber. He’s right in line with Dobson’s [comments](#) that same-sex marriage and civil unions are the path to “marriage between a man and his donkey” and his likening “the robed justices of the Supreme Court” to the “robed thugs of the Ku Klux Klan.”

Pryor is also another Bush “end-run.” While Congress was on a one-week break late last year, Bush [appointed](#) him to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, where he sits until the end of 2005 . . . [at least](#).

The senate had previously blocked former Alabama Attorney General Pryor’s appointment to the Atlanta-based 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, citing his criticism of the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision and other civil rights legislation. While he served as attorney general of Alabama, Pryor had links to antigay organizations and other conservative groups placed on the state website. There were no links to groups with neutral or differing viewpoints.

Pryor was also the only attorney general from another state to author an amicus brief defending the Texas sodomy statute used solely against homosexuals when the case ([Lawrence v. Texas](#)) was before the U.S. Supreme Court. In the brief he argued that states have an interest in singling out same-sex relationships for punishment and compared them to “prostitution, adultery, necrophilia, bestiality, possession of child pornography . . . incest and pedophilia.” The date of a Pryor family vacation at Disney World was changed to avoid being in the park when same-sex families were also there. As Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Lambda Legal put it, “William Pryor is the most demonstrably antigay judicial nominee in recent memory.”

But it is not just gay Americans Mr. Pryor has a problem with. As Doreen Brandt of 365Gay.com’s Washington Bureau [reported](#), Pryor’s record “has repeatedly shown clear hostility to . . . those with HIV, women, people of color, disabled people and others.” Lambda Defense provides a comprehensive [review](#) of Mr. Pryor’s record that should, unequivocally, preclude him from sitting on any federal bench. People for the American Way offers several [summaries](#) of Pryor’s “judicial philosophy” (as well as [background](#) articles on the evangelical Christian Right’s assault on an independent judiciary).

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist was also a performer in the Justice Sunday Show, albeit by video. But his decision to appear on the show may hurt him with those Americans (and Christians) who don’t share the star chamber’s goals. As Dick Polman noted in his Philadelphia Inquirer [article](#), “his [Frist’s] decision to appear on the show may hurt him with those Americans who don’t share the beliefs expressed Sunday night. In fact, 430 religious leaders told him in a letter the other day, ‘Your participation in the events gives your personal stamp of approval and legitimates an event built on inflammatory falsehoods.’”

Mr. Polman’s article also accurately noted, “The founders excised from the Constitution all references to God, and used the word only twice in the 85 Federalist Papers. And one of the nation’s first treaties, unanimously approved in 1797 by Congress and endorsed by President John Adams, stated: ‘The Government of the United States . . . is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.’”

Justice Sunday claimed to be a war on behalf of “people of faith.” In fact, it was a war *against* people of faith and those who don’t support the star chamber’s desires for a theocratic state. National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) represented the Justice Sunday show. Their [“Statement of Faith”](#) and [“Code of Ethics”](#) do much to explain. The first three items in their Statement of Faith read

1. We believe the Bible to be inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory.

From NRB's "Code of Ethics":

a) I will conduct my personal life corporate ministry, and business affairs in a way that will not bring shame or reproach to the name of the Lord or the NRB or its members. Rather, I will speak to bring glory and pleasure to our Lord and encourage others to do likewise. [1 Peter 1:14–16, 2:12, 4:11]

b) I will speak the truth in love. [Ephesians 4:1–16]

c) I will recognize and respect what the Lord is doing through other individuals and organizations while refraining from unnecessary criticism of them. [1 Peter 3:8,9]

d) I will not use media to knowingly speak falsely against anyone. [Exodus 20:16]

Justice Sunday star Rev. Albert Mohler is on record calling the papacy a "false and unbiblical office." In 2003 Mohler told Terry Gross on NPR that "any belief system [leading] away from the cross of Christ and toward another way of ultimate meaning, is, indeed, wicked and evil." So much for Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and *all other* "people of faith" and other spiritual beliefs.

Given the script of the Justice Sunday Show, NRB's "Code of Ethics" is as valid as [Tom DeLay's](#). And therein lies the value of the event. The star chamber's chautauqua was designed to imprint the message that anyone who disagreed with the Dobson-Perkins definition of "faith" or who opposed Bush's judicial nominees was a godless Hun. In their grab for political power, evangelicals Dobson and Perkins seem to have forgotten Proverbs 11:29: "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind," even in the House where [Tom Delay](#) plays god.

Jim Wallis, a progressive Christian leader, e-mailed readers of his [Sojourners](#) web site: "This [Justice Sunday] is a dramatic new and serious breach in the relationship between faith and politics . . . Republicans and their religious supporters are questioning the faith and religious integrity of their opponents. That is an escalation of the religious/political war." Mr. Wallis also wisely warned against Frist's move toward "a Republican theocracy" and its evangelical star chamber masters.

Barry W. Lynn, executive director of [Americans United for Separation of Church and State](#), said Justice Sunday marked a turning point. "This is the closest thing to a civil war within the religious community that I've seen in the past 25 years." A religious civil war with power crazed evangelicals like Dobson and Perkins attacking other Christians: the faith-based divide-and-conquer strategy Karl Rove used to keep George W. in the White House coming home to roost via Bush's homophobic judicial nominations. How very appropriate.

In the aftermath of Injustice Sunday a new label began appearing. It seems to have originated in Canada where Dobson focused his campaign to sway that nation's [voters](#). He used his January 2005 radio [broadcast](#)—carried on 130 Canadian stations—to pound away at familiar erroneous themes: same-sex marriage is not a human rights issue and legalizing it would destroy the institution of marriage and undermine society.

More than a [few](#) international [organizations](#) (and the U.S. Supreme Court in [Loving v. Virginia](#)) have reaffirmed that the civil right to a legally recognized marital union is indeed a "human rights" issue. A few months before Dobson's broadcast, the [American Anthropological Association](#) issued a report stating, "The results of more than a century of anthropological research on households, kinship relationships, and

families, across cultures and through time, provide no support whatsoever for the view that either civilization or viable social orders depend upon marriage as an exclusively heterosexual institution.”

The new label spawned by Dobson’s evangelical cohorts to describe those Canadian citizens supporting that nation’s move to recognize same-sex marriage is . . . ["equality tyrants."](#) (Honest . . . you couldn’t make this stuff up.)

“Justice Sunday” promoted injustice and the Dobson-Perkins star chamber’s grab for total power and control, nothing more and nothing less. Al Gore recognized that and [spoke out](#): “What makes it [Justice Sunday] so dangerous for our country is their [Dobson, Perkins, Frist] willingness to do serious damage to our American democracy in order to satisfy their lust for one-party domination of all three branches of government. . . . They seek nothing less than absolute power.”

“Equality tyrants” would have no place in the Dobson-Perkins-Frist one-party theocracy. “Equality” would be a sin, as well as illegal. But tyrants would indeed reign supreme.

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