

## *Theocracy Alert*

### **Homophobia in action, inert creationism, and the drive for a radical Christian Supreme Court justice**

**By Mel Seesholtz, Ph.D.**

Online Journal Contributing Writer

July 19, 2005—Several years ago there was one of those gut-wrenching can-you-believe-some-humans-are-*that-stupid* stories in the media. A man saw his male dog “humping” another male dog. Convinced his dog was “gay,” he beat him to death. Since then, Karl Rove [masterminded](#) the anti-gay politics that fed into and fed off the Christian Right’s lethal homophobia. The effects have been widespread and include this July 14 [headline](#): “Thought Toddler Gay, Dad Kills Son.”

The Washington Blade [report](#) made the case:

He [the father] was going to beat the gay out of him [his 3-year-old son], even if it killed the boy. And in this case, the prosecutor maintains that it did. People like James Dobson, Tony Perkins, Gary Bauer, Rick Santorum, George W. Bush and others who preach hatred and intolerance can’t divorce themselves from cases like this one. Every time a gay teen kills himself, or Christian parents lock their [child](#) in some religious hell hole that tries to brainwash their child straight, the preachers of hatred should be given credit for the seeds of tragedy they have sown.

The story was not, of course, reported on any of the Christian Right’s web sites, nor was another [story](#), “New Instances Of Using ‘Gay’ As Means Of Torture”:

Interrogators called a suspected terrorist a “homosexual” and subjected him to abusive and degrading treatment, forcing him to wear a bra, dance with another man and behave like a dog, military investigators reported Wednesday [July 13, 2005], saying that justified their call for disciplinary action.

This time the action took place at Guantanamo Bay rather than [Abu Ghraib](#). The military investigators called for Major-General Geoffrey Miller to be reprimanded for failing to properly oversee interrogations, but they were overruled by General Bantz Craddock, who concluded Miller did not violate any U.S. laws or policies. He’s probably correct. Homophobia does seem to have become U.S. policy and, if the Christian Right get their way, will be embedded in U.S. laws and the prevailing ideology of those interpreting the laws.

You just know the leaders of the Christian Right were rapturing and chanting “there’s no place like theocracy, there’s no place like theocracy” when they read of a decision by a Nigerian court and its “activist judge.” The 365Gay.com [headline](#) said it all: “Court Sentences Gay Man To Death By Stoning”:

A 50-year-old man has been sentenced by a Nigerian court to death by stoning after he admitted in court he has had sex with men. The man, whose name has not been made public, had been charged with sodomy and brought before a Sharia or Islamic court in northern Nigeria. Following a brief trial he was acquitted. But, according to a UN report, the judge then asked the man if he had ever had sex with another man. When the man answered yes the judge convicted him of sodomy and sentenced him to death.

But the Christian Right has been unusually silent about another major news story. Since the Rove-Plame story broke, the web sites of Louis Sheldon's Traditional Values Coalition (TVC), James Dobson's Focus on the Family, and Don Wildmon's American Family Association have had virtually nothing to say about the matter. TVC did, however, have a link to a WorldNet Daily [article](#) that dismissed the whole Rove affair. This is not at all surprising. Rove is, after all, the Christian Right's strategy guru and propaganda minister, as New York Times writer Paul Krugman [noted](#):

What Mr. Rove understood, long before the rest of us, is that we're not living in the America of the past, where even partisans sometimes changed their views when faced with the facts. Instead, we're living in a country in which there is no longer such a thing as nonpolitical truth. In particular, there are now few, if any, limits to what conservative politicians can get away with: the faithful will follow the twists and turns of the party line with a loyalty that would have pleased the Comintern.

But Rove had an even earlier role model who was also devastatingly successful, for a while...

Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia, nor in England, nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country. -- Hermann Goering, April 18, 1946

So if homophobic murder, torture and Karl Rove aren't in their crosshairs, what occupies the leaders of the American Taliban these days? Well, they are [irate](#) that the zoo in Tulsa, Oklahoma, declined to put up a "biblical creation" exhibit, but [ecstatic](#) that "Holy Land Experience," a bible-based theme park near Orlando, Florida, retained its tax-exempt status.

Ken Ham of the creationist group [Answers in Genesis](#) is very annoyed with Washington, D.C.'s Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. Why? Because the cardinal said Catholics do not have to take Genesis literally, rather they can understand it as what McCarrick (and Pope John Paul II) called a "*beautiful story*" (italics mine). Ham's response were nothing short of [laughable](#):

If you're going to believe in evolution, and say that God took an ape man and made a soul to make Adam, and God took an ape woman and made a soul to make Eve, then the woman came from an ape woman. She didn't come from Adam. And if the woman didn't come from Adam's side, then you've got a major problem.

One of Ham's "major problems" is that evolution means women and men are equals. The truly deranged [comments](#) the Rev. Willie Wilson recently made to his congregation at Union Temple Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., help explain how and why that equality would be problematic: "Sisters making more money than brothers and it's creating problems in families ... that's one of the reasons many of our women are becoming lesbians."

Responding to such lunacy is difficult, but necessary. First of all, the latest [work](#) of Dr. Qazi Rahman, a psychobiologist at the University of East London, and Dr. Glenn Wilson, a personality specialist from the University of London, confirmed what virtually all other independent researchers worldwide have already concluded: there is *no evidence* that people can "learn" to be gay. Rev. Wilson's statement that African-American women are, *en masse*, "becoming lesbian" is a shameful lie and egregious insult.

Apparently Rev. Wilson also believes it's against God's will for women to earn equal wages or, God forbid, higher wages than men. But like Ham's claim for literal "creationism," Wilson does have the Bible to back up his misogyny. In the New Testament's First Timothy, the Apostle Paul says he will "suffer not a

woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” because, as Paul states, “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression.”

But what seems foremost in the “minds” of the leaders of the Christian Right is -- using the Rove-Goering model – leading the flock into a holy war over Bush’s Supreme Court nominations. Howard Phillips, chairman of the Conservative Caucus, delivered petitions to the White House calling on Bush to nominate former Alabama chief justice Roy Moore to the U.S. Supreme Court. Phillips told a news conference that putting Moore on the U.S. Supreme Court “could bring about a turning point in our jurisprudence and in our culture, back to biblical morality” that included [stoning](#) a lot of people to death, no doubt beginning with gays, lesbians, and women who don’t “mind their place” as the Bible defines it.

As 365Gay.com [reported](#), “In 2003 Moore was removed as Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court after the state’s nine-member Court of Judicial Inquiry found he had violated judicial ethical standards.” Moore also has a long record of hostility to gay citizens and their families:

In February 2002 when the state Supreme Court ruled against a lesbian mother who was seeking custody of her three daughters Moore used a litany of homophobic adjectives in his written decision. Moore said that homosexuality is “an inherent evil” that should not be tolerated. His decision went on to say that the mother’s relationship made her an unfit parent and that homosexuality is “abhorrent, immoral, detestable, a crime against nature, and a violation of the laws of nature.”

Joining Phillips in support of Moore was none other than homophobe extraordinaire [Alan Keyes](#), who said Moore would help overturn the 2003 Supreme Court ruling that struck down sodomy laws and stated that gays have a right to “due process.”

Aren’t *all* American citizens guaranteed the right to “due process”? Apparently Keyes, Phillips and Moore don’t believe so. Another “Christian” leader who shares that belief is the rabidly homophobic Rev. Louis P. Sheldon.

On July 13, Sheldon sent “a note from Rev. Lou” entitled “TVC Supreme Court Alert” (all in caps and bold red font, of course). It epitomizes the business of homophobia and the hypocrisy of the Christian Right.

After the usual *pro forma* ranting, Lou pleaded “I need [your immediate help](#).” The link is his. The frantic call for donations was only the first of many:

I am planning a massive national grassroots mobilization and media campaign to fight the radical left and pressure the Senate to confirm President Bush’s nominee. [Click here to make an emergency donation](#) of \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250 or more to TVC today to help us go into targeted states with this massive campaign to get President Bush’s nominees confirmed.

“I am planning...” Lou’s megalomania is obvious from the beginning. With that in mind, consider what else he had to say...

“To confirm President Bush’s nominee.” Such blind faith that “the leader” is right in all he does hasn’t been seen since the 1930s, in Germany. More than a few commentators – even the pathetically snide [Ann Coulter](#)—have documented that high court nominees don’t always turn out as expected. It seems likely that the usually hysterical Sheldon has simply gone over the edge in his obsessive-compulsive opposition to “the radical left” that advocates the radical idea of civil equality for all American citizens no matter what their religious beliefs or political leanings.

The “traditional values” of greed and lust for power are the hallmarks of Sheldon’s missive, as Lou immediately acknowledged: “Our Supreme Court Task Force is already formed and ... we have a Battle Plan budget of \$4.5 million.” But it gets better...

After listing the particulars of the “battle plan” (isn’t Christianity supposed to be opposed to war and battle plans?), Lou stated they are meant “to show the Senate and the liberal news media that *the American voters* want a Supreme Court justice who *represents our values*.” Almost immediately he added, “we must ensure that America has a Supreme Court justice who will *interpret the U.S. Constitution accurately*” (italics mine).

“The American voters.” All the American voters did not vote for GWB. In fact, almost half didn’t. And Mr. Bush’s current approval ratings with those who did vote for him are not exactly anything to brag about. Neither are Lou Sheldon’s “traditional” and “family values,” the ones he so megalomaniacally called “our values.” Advocating a certain set of carefully edited religious “values” perverted for political gain and twisted to *intentionally* hurt some Americans and their families as much as possible does not equate with “*interpret the U.S. Constitution accurately*,” except maybe in the theocratic “mind” of Louis P. Sheldon.

Sheldon’s unbridled hatred for gay Americans is legendary. He did, after all, suggest that gay Americans (and other “undesirables”) be rounded up and put into [concentration camps](#). Any program or legislation that would in *any* way recognize gay Americans as equal citizens or benefit them and their families has been vehemently opposed by Sheldon and the TVC. He doesn’t see gay people as people, nor does he care about the 8 to 10 million children being reared in same-sex households. So much for *his* “pro-family, traditional” values.

After years of studying Sheldon’s “career” and TVC’s actions, the inevitable conclusion is *Schadenfreude*. They seem to take some kind of perverse pleasure in seeing gay and lesbian Americans suffer and be degraded as much as possible and in all ways possible. The “traditional value” they represent and advocate is hate.

Next came Lou’s statement that “TVC helped win the confirmation of Clarence Thomas through our Christian mobilization efforts. Even Newsweek told about what TVC did for Clarence Thomas. We can win this fight too if we have your [emergency donation](#) of \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250 or more.”

Sheldon and the TVC define “activist judges” as those who overturn existing law in favor of personal ideologies and beliefs. The Supreme Court justice that has done that more often than *any* other is Clarence Thomas, as a [study](#) by the New York Times documented:

We found that justices vary widely in their inclination to strike down Congressional laws. Justice Clarence Thomas, appointed by President George H. W. Bush, was the most inclined, voting to invalidate 65.63 percent of those laws; Justice Stephen Breyer, appointed by President Bill Clinton, was the least, voting to invalidate 28.13 percent. The tally for all the justices [is] Thomas 65.63 percent, Kennedy 64.06 percent, Scalia 56.25 percent, Rehnquist 46.88 percent, O’Connor 46.77 percent, Souter 42.19 percent, Stevens 39.34 percent, Ginsburg 39.06 percent, Breyer 28.13 percent.

Many of the [decisions](#) by [Clarence Thomas](#) involved negating existing or denying “[civil rights](#),” things near and dear to the heart of Sheldon and the TVC.

Although not specifically mentioned in his missive, Lou and the other leaders of the Christian Right wholeheartedly support Justice Antonin Scalia as the epitome of a jurist who, while claiming to be an “originalist,” “federalist,” and all around constitutional purist, rules according to certain “values” he shares with the American Taliban. For example, Justice Scalia wrote that Colorado’s *overtly* antigay [Amendment 2](#) was constitutional because it reflected voters’ “moral disapproval of homosexual conduct.” If that’s not an activist theocratic judge legislating from the bench, I don’t know what is.

Supreme Court nominees will always be “political.” That’s the nature of the system. But when religious dogma and ideology are thrown into the process, it breaks down. Perhaps that’s why the Founding Fathers were so careful to remove all references to “God” from the Constitution the Supreme Court was designed to interpret and uphold. Perhaps that’s also why one of the nation’s first treaties, unanimously

approved in 1797 by Congress and endorsed by ([Deist](#)) President John Adams, stated “The Government of the United States... is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.”

Nevertheless, “[Justice Sunday II: God Save This Honorable Court](#)”—the sequel to “[Injustice Sunday](#)”—is scheduled for August 14.

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