

January 2002

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Terrorizing the "Christian Right"

National Public Radio (NPR) thinks that Christians might be linked to the deadly anthrax that was mailed to certain liberal senators. The basis for this incredulous charge? The Traditional Values Coalition, a Christian organization, once circulated a press release criticizing several senators for their plan to drop the phrase "so help me God" from the oath that witnesses take prior to testifying before Senate committees.

In a series of related stories this week, it appears that the Democratic Party may be behind the investigative inquiries of the NPR and other recent media swipes against the "religious right." An article by syndicated columnist David Limbaugh, explains why Democrats would come after Christians. Titled, **Democratic hate speech**, Limbaugh writes:

JANUARY 5, 2002—Did you hear about the Democrats' strategy to use the war on terrorism to their political advantage in upcoming congressional elections? We've got it on no less an authority than Newsweek's Howard Fineman.

Fineman, certainly no enemy of the Democrats, reports that they are planning to demonize the Republicans by comparing their "Christian right" to the Taliban in terms of religious extremism and intolerance. In this way they hope to enrage President Bush and lure him into a firefight at home.

Let's put aside the outrageousness of their plan to embroil a wartime president in a distracting domestic battle for purely partisan reasons. Instead, let's focus on the outrageousness of the premise underlying their strategy. That premise -- which is nothing new for liberals -- is that the religious right is intolerably intolerant and bigoted. The only thing new is that they now have an inflammatory way of packaging it -- by exploiting the events of Sept. 11.

Fundamentalists of any religion (read: Christians) are dangerous. And who are the Christian fundamentalists? Essentially, those who believe the Bible is the Word of God. The term connotes a backwardness and absence of sophistication and enlightenment.

Democratic Party Chairman Terry McAuliffe will have some ammunition when he begins to sell this theme. New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman provided much fodder in his Nov. 27 column entitled "The Real War." Friedman argues that the real enemy in our war is not terrorism, but religious totalitarianism -- "a view of the world that my faith must reign supreme, and can be affirmed and held passionately only if all others are negated."

As the balance of Friedman's column makes clear, however, he uses the term religious totalitarianism much more broadly than he defines it. By religious totalitarians he really means those who claim to have a corner on exclusive truth -- even if they are completely tolerant of those with other beliefs.

Friedman prefers those who have "reinterpreted their faith in a way that embraces modernity, without weakening religious passion, and in a way that affirms that God speaks multiple languages and is not exhausted by just one faith."

Among the demands that are non-negotiable for Democrats in our state, are; the guarantees of food, affordable housing, medical care, education, and jobs. Calling for an end to discrimination in all basic human services, Democrats want new classes of protection added to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including; sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, size, and political affiliation.

Also, in the same first plank, and likewise non-negotiable, is a renewed call for affirmative action (racial quotas), abortion rights, same-sex marriages, separation of church and state and opposition to prayer in schools - positions formerly opposed by Republicans according to their platform, but evidently now on the Chairman's table for reconsideration.

Another fundamental doctrine that Democrats preach in the "burbs," is (in their own words) a "single, universal, publicly-funded, accountable Washington State health care system..." The terms "single" and "universal," means the existence of only one health care plan in our state. Hence, doctors and fellow members of the medical and health care profession would become government workers, employed by the Department of Social and Health Services.

And, many other equally bold but hopefully unattainable objectives - apart from an overthrow of capitalism in America - are outlined in the Democrat plank called "Labor and Economic Justice." Democrats seek sweeping "tax reform that shifts the wealth of this country to working families and their communities." Also demanded, is a "reducing" of the "wage gap between rural and urban areas of the state."

Perhaps the only issues similarly addressed by both political parties, but owned by neither, are that of families and communities. Republicans view the family "as the basic unit of our community [which] must be respected and enhanced." Democrats declare that "Strong communities are the foundation for a safe, stable, and prosperous future for our families." True on both accounts. Yet, neither side addresses the national corruption stemming from the rapidly corroding family.

Democrats see no harm in "Junior" viewing salacious, pornographic images on the Internet at the local library. Nor are they moved when a school counselor drives "Missy" to the abortion clinic without the knowledge or consent of her parents. And, "Dad," dropping a paycheck in the "slots" on the way home from work or risking as much playing video poker on the Internet after dinner—well, that doesn't seem to bother more than a handful in either party - if the games are taxed!

Generations ago, our founders warned of public behaviors that would lead to the overthrow of our nation. One of the founders, Samuel Adams, said; "A general dissolution of principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy." He continued, "Neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt."

Similarly, prophets of old warned the people of Israel that the love of money and the pursuit of unwholesome and ungodly pleasures would most certainly bring calamity upon them. But the people replied, *...Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits [illusions]. . . cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.*" (Isa 30:10)

Chairman Vance faces the uncomfortable but common tests of those who would lead. The matter to be settled, is will he speak right things or will he speak smooth things? Time will tell.

Rick Forcier

Executive Director