

Christian Right labeled as hate group in US - Rising in Canada

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- *Rick Barnes, GLBTQ editor* The civil rights movement in the United States took a big step this past few months with the [Southern Poverty Law Centre](#) (SPLC) listing the Christian Right as an extremist group. The SPLC is known for their work in keeping people informed and educated on the activities of the Klu Klux Klan and white supremacist groups.

"Our bailiwick is extremism. We've avoided the Christian Right in the past, and we don't feel we've expanded to include the Christian Right, we feel very strongly they have entered our world [of extremism]. They have gone absolutely wild. The level of personal demonization was really quite remarkable. We felt we had to say, 'Thus far, no further,'" ~ Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center speaking to the [New York Blade.com](#)

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Like any marketer they have to find a way to get their product into as many homes as they can. If you can't do that your business will go bankrupt. They have used the Soviet Union for years and then had to come up with another message to sell their product. After some careful and strategic planning they decided on abortion and homosexuality.

"Homosexuality itself is not important to most of these guys. But it's an important means to an end they believe in, and that is straightening out America to make sure Jesus can come back. Even if they're using anti-gay politics insincerely, they are sincerely interested in taking over the democratic process.

So that's why it became such a major issue. It came from the top down. This new,

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loud voice against homosexuality came through the parent-church leaders, like Falwell, who began to tell the world that homosexuality was a threat.

Then it trickled down to local churches, and now it has become one of the great hate movements, I think, in history. It's dangerous stuff, because it knows no questions. It hears no response. It is a juggernaut. It is a bulldozer. It is a blitzkrieg that doesn't stop to reason." ~ [Rev. Mel White](#) , founder of Soul force

The Christian Right is a real threat to secular society. They have one objective, to take over society and wait for Jesus. Many of them really believe this is what is needed. They are smart, use savvy marketing and branding to win converts to their cause. Tstrategicstategic in their efforts, focusing on targeting their money and resources in areas that they have the best opportunity to succeed, much in the way a political party may do or Coca-Cola would in selling their product to us.

From these bases of support they have been able to elect people that support them, get anti-gay laws passed or rolled back. A campaign that equates all the ills of America onto homosexuality. The end justifies the means.

The Christian Right though still a minority is well financed and able to deliver help to supportive politicians. The help comes in the form of motivating its growing number of members to get out and vote. It comes in sponsoring anti-gay media campaigns and referendums. Their clout and ability to target a politician that disagrees with them, make them evformidablermidible, leading to many endorsing the anti-gay message to retain political office.

In Canada we have been immune to the Christian Right, they have not been that well financed nor taken seriously by the majority of Canadians and politicians until recently. With the successes south of the border, they have been emboldened to act in attempt to duplicate the same results here. They have not been doing it alone however, the American Christian Right has been financing the smaller poorer Canadian cousins.

The Reform Party formed to provide an alternative for Conservative voters in Alberta and western Canada focused on tax cuts, less government and crime. The Christian right gravitated to this upstart party and elected many people that supported their values in nominations and then onto the Canadian Parliament.

The party attempted for the better part of a decade to appeal to conservative and ticked off voters in Ontario, having taken most of the west. Along the way there

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were many setbacks in this plan. Organization was poor and the off the cuff remarks and opinions of Reform candidates and MPs about issues like abortion and gay rights showed a level of intolerance that was not acceptable to people in urban Ontario.

The Reform party then changed its name and elected former Alberta Finance Minister and Christian Activist Stockwell Day leader. The effort was a bust. Day used too many poorly planned publicity stunts, messed up a few key press conferences during the election and then vulnerable to attack for his views on abortion and homosexuality. Here again, the Canadian public rejected the party's real or perceived extremism at the polls.

The party then struck a deal after much wrangling with the Progressive Party of Canada. The Tory's had a long history of tolerance and being socially progressive. The Alliance was seen as socially conservative. This marriage did not go without many setbacks. conservative Party elected Stephen Harper as leader. Two progressives in Belinda Stronach and Peter MacKay came in second and third.

Scott Brison, an out gay Progressive Conservative left the new party and joined the Liberal's. Joe Clark, former Progressive Conservative Prime Minister and leader campaigned for Brison now a Liberal during the election prominent PC's left as well.

The 2004 federal election was not the break through the Conservatives or Canadians expected. They finished second in a race they may have won were it not for some major stumbles. More comments marriage opened the door for the the Liberals to leap onto voters concerns about the Conservatives social agenda.

A bright spot for the Conservatives was the election in Greater Toronto of Belinda Stronach as a Member of Parliament. It was seen as proof the party was not intolerant. The Liberals Sponsorship Scandal took on new life and saw the Governing party fall in the polls, the Conservatives were riding high with numbers they had never dreamed of in Ontario. At the same time the Conservatives continued their assault on the same-sex marriage bill.

After the election at the first policy convention for the new Conservative party they reconfirmed voters fears of the social agenda. The Christian Right was evident

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everywhere. The Defend Marriage Coalition parked their luxurious motor-home office in the parkade. A national pro-life organization was out in force among the delegates. They had elected many delegates in hopes they could get the party to pass anti-gay marriage and anti-abortion policy.

The leadership of Defend marriage were filmed by the CBC during a convention strategy session. They all speculated on the resolutions' final numbers, most saying 80% would be a good number. Then they turned to discussing the leverage they had over some Conservative MPs that would be voting for same-sex marriage in Parliament. One of them stated they had video tape of one of the MPs. What the video tape was we do not know. The indication inferred is that the tape put the member in a compromising position.

Did the tape show the member in a sexual situation, was he doing something illegal or morally repugnant? One suspects these people would ignore the tape evidence they had in order to force the MP to vote against same-sex marriage. This is an example to the lengths the Christian Right will go to move its agenda. It begs the question, do we want these people leading our country.

Note: For the record, the vote on the anti-gay marriage motion was 77% and the vote to support access to abortion narrowly won with 54% .

The Conservative party was on a roll with the Liberals getting beat up day after day over scandal after scandal. Then Belinda Stronach left the Conservatives, dealing a serious blow to the party's credibility among social moderates in vote rich Ontario and Urban Canada.

The Conservatives then had their own scandal of their own making. Out came Conservative MP Grewal with allegations he was being offered a cabinet post and his wife would become a senator if they crossed the floor. Controversy dogged the MP as he alluded to secretly taped conversations. It turns out the evidence is not there and may be the conservatives doctored the tapes. Conservatives lose again, the large Conservative lead in the polls was gone.

This was all followed with news the Christian Right was targeting conservative nominations across the country. They had encouraged people to join the Conservative party and support appointments by the Christian

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Right leadership. The news here is that they have been successful. You can expect more to come.

Canada is seeing the birth of a very sophisticated Christian Right political movement. They are focused on the Conservative party modeled after the success in the United States with the Republican party.

They are being financed in part by Focus in the Family and groups like the Knights of Columbus. The Crusade has moved to Canada. We better be prepared.

[Rick Barnes](#) is the editor for [GLBTQ](#) issues for PEJ News, he lives in Kelowna BC and is active in progressive politics.

For more on the Holy War see The Intelligence Project - monitors hate groups and extremist activities throughout the U.S. and publishes the Center's award-winning [Intelligence Report](#)

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*For more information on social conservatives, Stephen Harper, gay, same-sex or equal marriage, James Dobson, gay evangelicals, Focus on the Family, Bishop Henry, The Pope, use the **search box** in the side bar here and [technorati](#)*

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