

'New Christian Right' in Pacific Grove

Editor:

It was recently brought to public attention that Pacific Grove houses the administrative offices of an organization that is part of a movement generally termed the "New Christian Right." The organization is Christian Voice.

Christian Voice received recognition here when a local newspaper ran a front page story reporting that Dan Rather and his *60 Minutes* crew had come to PG to talk to and film CV representatives.

The article was an "objective" journalistic account of the nature and policies of the group — so objective that the fact that Christian Voice is an extremely anti-feminist, anti-homosexual, anti-liberal group was reported like the details of a pleasant excursion taken by a local Girl Scout troop.

I wanted to add an opinion to this purportedly innocent reporting.

The facts are not hard to find: coverage of this movement has occurred in many major magazines and papers over the last year.

The "New Christian Right" is emerging in this country as a potentially influential political lobbying organization. Hiding behind the rhetoric of fundamentalist religion, they are decidedly political: they take ultra-conservative positions on nearly every issue and piece of legislation.

Some of the stands and strategies of Christian Voice specifically:

—They are militantly anti-homosexual. Christian Voice has been instrumental in challenging the gay rights campaign for federal protection of jobs for homosexuals. They were also active in rallying behind the Briggs referendum of 1978 (to bar homosexual teachers.)

—CV opposes abortion, federal and local spending on abortion, and the ERA. The New Christian Right at large has succeeded in blocking passage of the ERA in 15 states, and disrupted the White House Conference on the Family with conservative demands around preserving the family. They are also lobbying for legislation that would make abortion unconstitutional.

—CV supports ultra-conservative policies on significant issues such as

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SALT II, the nuclear arms race, and the economy.

CV has targeted 36 liberal politicians for defeat; they put out a "Congressional Report Card" which grades politicians. As could be expected, liberals rate extremely low "grades" (i.e., Senator Cranston and Representatives Panetta and Dellums rate 0, 21, and 0, respectively) while conservatives do quite well (i.e., Senator Hayakawa rates 79 and Rep. Goldwater rates 100.)

CV's strategy is to reach as many people as possible by blitzing out the media. Funded by wealthy conservatives around the country, they use radio, television and film to spread their word, and hit millions of people with CV propaganda by use of highly sophisticated and effective computerized mailing services.

What is perhaps the most insidious and frightening aspect of Christian Voice is that they appeal to people's fears about a society which is characterized by tremendous levels of insecurity — economic, social and psychological — and rapid change.


This has particularly important implications for women. Many issues that are considered to be progressive by feminists — new options for women outside the home, relatively easier access to abortion (although even this has

been changing), the possibility to be defined as persons other than mothers and wives — are equated with moral decay by CV and are taken on as issues to be attacked.

It seems to me that the positions espoused by groups like Christian Voice primarily reflect the extent to which people — both men and women — are threatened by the release of women from traditional roles and the diminishing of patriarchal power over women.

I think that we should be adequately alerted to the presence of such an organization in our community.

Vicki Smith
Monterey



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