

# Christian Right Employ Hitler-like Strategies

Cleland E. Selby

A friend recently stated this truth about me "Cleland, you are as passion-filled about the fundamentalist monsters as they are about your sexual orientation." That probably is true. But, unlike these ministers, I seem to lack the Christian rhetoric that all too often disguises their hates. They claim to love me even though they hate my "sin." I just cannot seem to feel much love toward them. And I do despise their "sin."

But I am equally as frustrated by many of my fellow gay brothers and sisters who seem blind to the Christian right's Nazi-like strategies. Just as "we are everywhere", so are the increasing numbers of Christian fundamentalists. Their churches are sprouting up everywhere. Twenty-five Vermont

Recognized Independent Schools, which are all adjuncts of Christian right churches have been germinated in recent years. These schools have an enrollment of 1200 plus students. And these figures do not include the hundreds of students who are in fundamentalist home school programs.

I am very concerned for a wide variety of reasons. And I refuse to minimize the impact this movement is having, not only upon those of us who are gay, but upon the child abuse that occurs when the rod is not spared for fear that the child will be spoiled.

Once upon a time the Christian right's single agenda was the evil of communism. Then they moved into the evils of feminism and abortion. Now its focus is primarily upon homosexuality. These ministers are ruthless. A Shelburne Baptist minister wrote this in a recent letter to me: "Homosexuals are human beings trapped in a sinful behavior, just as an alcoholic is trapped in his... I categorically deny that God made you or anyone else to be a homosexual. Somewhere along the line you may have had certain desires within you, to be sure. But being homosexual is a choice."

Now I have one ally, one other gay man who has spoken out much more

eloquently than I have done on this issue. Reverend Mel White, when he was struggling within his heterosexual marriage for some relief for those desires within him, ghostwrote for Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Billy Graham. In his poignant memoir, *Stranger at the Gate: To Be Gay and Christian in America*, Mel White has "outed" the strategies of the Christian right clergy. He cites examples of language used by these "pastors" which is taken verbatim from language used by Hitler and other leading Nazi figures. That hatred momentarily paralyzed me last week when I followed an Oregon car that hosted these two bumper stickers, placed parallel to each other: Take Pride in America: Kill a Homosexual and Jesus Saves.

I know the horror of these ministers. When I was the principal of an elementary school here in Vermont, I was subpoenaed to testify in court about the evidence of physical abuse I had seen on the body of a six year old boy who eventually lay comatose from more severe beatings. In that court the father and stepmother "bore witness" to a God that wanted them to discipline Joel, to force out the evil in this child. Under oath they told about the sermons their



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