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SEXISM IS A “FAMILY VALUE”

KIMBERLY CHARLES*

SUMMARY

This essay centers on the argument made by the French feminist Colette Guillaumin and her claim that “[s]exism [is] . . . a Right-Wing constant of any discourse.”¹ This essay follows the argument made by Guillaumin and her theories concerning Right-Wing ideology in general.² In this essay, the phrase “American Right-Wing” refers primarily to the coalition of churches formed under the Christian Coalition of America.³ When I make broad references to the “Right-Wing,” I am speaking the Christian Coalition of America. My position is that as long as American Right-Wing groups, as represented by the Christian Coalition of America, remains steeped in a tradition of Fundamentalist Christianity and actively promote the fundamental society of domination that is implicit within the movement, sexism will continue to be an underlying value in their discourse. The headlines of this essay in most cases correspond to specific arguments made by Guillaumin. This correlation is intended to facilitate the reader’s ability to follow the parallels between what Guillaumin calls the “Right” and what the author of this essays calls the “Right-Wing.”

The purpose and the goals of the Christian Coalition of America as stated on their official web page: strengthening the family,⁴ protecting

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¹ COLETTE GUILLAUMIN, *Sexism, A Right-Wing Constant of Any Discourse: A Theoretical Note, in RACISM, SEXISM, POWER AND IDEOLOGY* (Caroline Kunstenaar trans., 1995).

² See generally *id.*

³ *Call to Churches*, Christian Coalition of America, July 4, 2002, at <http://cc.org/become-involved/calltochurches.html>. According to their own web page they are “the largest and most active conservative grassroots political organization in America.” *Id.* “The Christian Coalition was founded in 1989 by Pat Robertson to give Christians a voice in government. [They] represent a growing group of nearly 2 million people of faith to have a voice in the conversation we call democracy.” *Id.* The Christian Coalition of America is a collation of different churches: “[They] are a coalition of pro-family Roman Catholics, evangelicals, and other people of faith.” *Id.*

⁴ See *id.* The Coalition has supported legislation enforcing the parental rights. For instance, they state that “[t]he Christian Coalition of America supports the enactment of the Child Custody Protection Act. This legislation reinforces both parental rights and states rights

innocent human life,⁵ returning, education to local and parental control,⁶ easing the tax burden on families,⁷ punishing criminals, and defending victims' rights,⁸ protecting young people and [their] communities, from the pollution of pornography,⁹ defending the institution of marriage,¹⁰ protecting religious freedom¹¹

by making it a federal crime to transport a minor girl out-of-state for an abortion in circumvention of a state law requiring that one of her parents (or a judge) be involved in the abortion decision." *Id.*

⁵ The Christian Coalition has taken numerous stands in the abortion debate against abortion.

The Christian Coalition of America supports the enactment of the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. This legislation codifies into federal law the long accepted principle that a baby that is completely expelled from the baby's mother, and shows any sign of life, is a "person" entitled to the full protection of the law.

Id. The Christian Coalition of America opposes the use of federal tax dollars to fund foreign organizations that perform abortions overseas or work to legalize abortion overseas. See *Letter to the U.S. House of Representatives in Support of the Mexico City Policy, May 7, 2001, Call to Churches*, at <http://cc.org/becomeinvolved/calltochurches.html> [hereinafter May 7, 2001 Letter].

⁶ One of the ways that the Christian Coalition has engaged themselves in the debate over education has been as supporters of the Boy Scouts.

Last year, in the landmark decision *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*, the Supreme Court of the United States protected the rights of freedom of speech and freedom of association of the Boy Scouts and other private organizations that support high moral standards. Sadly, many federally funded school districts are now threatening to exclude Boy Scout troops from their facilities because of the Scouts' refusal to surrender their First Amendment rights. These school districts wish to impose their values and beliefs in violation of the Boy Scouts' constitutionally protected rights.

See *Letter to the U.S. Senate in support of the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act amendment to S. 1, May 15, 2001*, Christian Coalition, at <http://cc.org/becomeinvolved/calltochurches.html>.

⁷ One way in which the Coalition has worked to support the families of America has been by arguing for tax reforms.

The Christian Coalition of America is actively working to reduce the heavy tax burden carried by America's families today. In order to help families keep more of their own hard-earned income for the family budget, we support raising the child tax credit from \$500 to \$1,000, and providing relief from the marriage tax penalty. We also support education savings accounts and an education tax credit to help families finance their children's education. And, in order to make adoption more accessible, we want to increase the adoption tax credit and make it permanent. The Christian Coalition of America also supports eliminating the death tax.

Id.

⁸ The Christian Coalition has also spoken out against gambling: "The Christian Coalition of America supports the enactment of the Internet Gambling Prohibition Act. This legislation is designed to put a stop to online gambling at the over 700 gambling sites on the Internet today. If Internet gambling is left unchecked, the privacy and easy-access that the Internet provides will result in an even greater temptation to our nation's poor, our youth, and those who are gambling addicts." *Id.*

⁹ See *Letter to Congress, September 6, 2002: House Members Need to Sign on as Cosponsors of the Child Pornography Prevention Constitutional Amendment*, Christian Coalition, at <http://cc.org/becomeinvolved/calltochurches.html>.

¹⁰ The Coalition believes that the family itself is under attack as well as the church. "There remains two final bastions of defense, the home and the church which these forces seem intent on destroying." *Id.*

¹¹ See *Call to Churches*, *supra* note 3.

I. INTRODUCTION

Right-Wing Fundamentalist Christian groups, such as the Christian Coalition of America have grown increasingly politically active and influential in the last twenty years in the United States.¹² Their desire for "one Nation under God"¹³ has grown into an entire political and social order. Yet, despite what secular America may believe, they are not representative of all Christian beliefs, thoughts, and ideology in America today. I am one such Christian who does not believe that America should be "one nation under God." I believe that Christ called Christians to live lives of love, mercy, justice, and peace in their everyday lives. I write to essay to communicate to readers, who may not be familiar with the diversity of Christian beliefs, that there is much more than the "one voice" presented by the Right-Wing, within Christianity.¹⁴ Contrary to the goals of the Christian Coalition of America that wants all Christians to speak with one voice, I want to show the readers that there are many different voices to be heard within Christianity, voices that argue for openness to, and inclusion of, different religions and believe in discussions about a future American society and a feminist agenda.

My intention in writing this essay is to show the implicit sexism found in the political, legal, and social agendas of the family values of the Fundamentalist Christian Right in America that are represented by coalitions such as the Christian Coalition of America. The Christian Coalition of America's voice may be the loudest, but it is certainly not the only voice. May this essay contribute to opening up a dialogue on the representation of Christianity in the legal, political and social orders of America.

Colette Guillaumin argues that sexism is always a presence in any Right-Wing discourse. In her book, *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology*, she notes that sexism is implicit in any Right-Wing society because such societies are predisposed to domination.¹⁵ The society represented by the Religious Right in present day America is one of privilege, power, and domination. The activism in which the Fundamentalist Christian Right engages preserves this status quo of domination and sexism for the sake of family values and for theocracy.¹⁶ This is not the only model of Christianity and religion in

¹² See *id.* According to the founder of the coalition Pat Robertson, the "Christian Coalition has well over a million supporters and 1,500 local chapters in all 50 states. During the 2000 elections we passed out 70 million voter guides." *Id.*

¹³ See *id.*

¹⁴ See Statement from Pat Robertson, Christian Coalition, at http://cc.org/become_involved/call_tochurches.html.

"We are a coalition of pro-family Roman Catholics, evangelicals, and other people of faith working together to become the unified voice of families in America." *Id.*

¹⁵ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 175.

¹⁶ See in general the above stated mission by the Christian Coalition of America. See *Call to*

America. I believe that it is important to speak up against this image of "one voice" by providing a second voice to the internal Christian dialogue.

II. METHOD

In this paper, I will use a theory that Colette Guillaumin has noted in her book *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology*.¹⁷ Using Guillaumin's theory that sexism is a constant of any Right-Wing discourse, I perform a textual analysis of the religiously and politically conservative or Right-Wing Christian groups that have wielded so much power and force in American politics since the inception of this country, particularly in the last twenty five years.¹⁸ I will examine cases, statutes and other relevant legal, political, and social doctrine to show that implicit within this right-wing discourse is a sexist view of women.

III. INTRODUCING GUILLAUMIN'S THEORY

Chapter Eight, "Sexism, a Right-Wing constant of any discourse," of *Racism, Sexism, Power, and Ideology* proposes that, in analyzing the Right, that one do it holistically. Guillaumin proposes that when we analyze the Right,¹⁹ we should focus not only on its theoretical output, but also its influence on ordinary conversation, the news, and other implicit discourse.²⁰ This is a much broader view of political discourse.²¹ This holistic analysis attempts to identify the political project that the Fundamentalist Christian Right is constructing and to grasp their ideology in its very process of articulation.²² This analysis works from the assumption "that the Right is an ideological form peculiar to relations of domination."²³ Guillaumin presupposes that sexism will always be a constant of Right-Wing discourse.²⁴

Guillaumin argues that the Right cannot be simply reduced to merely a political agenda or a treatise of ethical laws, although both of these elements are essential to it.²⁵ The Right is a society of domination.²⁶ The male in power is the dominator²⁷ and women are dominated.²⁸ This society of

Churches, *supra* note 3.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *See id.*

¹⁹ The "Right" here follows the understanding of a "Right" used by Guillaumin, meaning a political right. *See* Guillaumin, *supra* note 1.

²⁰ *See id.* at 171.

²¹ *See id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ *See id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *See* Guillaumin, *supra* note 1.

²⁶ *See id.* at 172.

²⁷ *Id.* at 173.

²⁸ For a discussion of the relationship between race, gender, and power, see also GLOBAL

domination is one that works toward order.²⁹ Within the order, there are certain conventional facts that are considered impenetrable to critical scrutiny.³⁰ These facts are considered non-political and non-social and "are seen as belonging to the natural order."³¹ "Right-Wing discourse, and speech, [in presenting] 'the facts as they stand,' claim, therefore, that these facts are correct, [and] that they must be maintained and/or improved, according to their own logic and in conformity to their nature."³² In the case of fundamentalist Christian political groups, the sets of facts considered to be above criticism are those of a literal interpretation of the Bible.³³ As Guillaumin states, "[R]elations of domination, exploitation, [and] inequality are held as socially necessary."³⁴ Actually, in their belief of the inerrancy of the biblical scriptures, the Fundamentalists go one step further. Domination, exploitation, and inequality are not only necessary, they are ordained to be the "will of God," and, therefore, just under the fundamentalist interpretation of biblical scripture.³⁵ Guillaumin writes:

Insofar as the fundamentalist interpretations of a patriarchal monotheism establish and reinforce "God's Will," a culture of blame, guilt, and punitiveness will remain the dominant theme through which the law will be enforced in civil authority and religious practice, especially as it relates to women's sexuality, resulting in violent assaults on human beings.³⁶

Guillaumin argues that the relationship between domination and the gender is both obvious and invisible.³⁷ I argue that the agenda of Fundamentalist Christians Right groups such as the Christian Coalition of America influence the social relationship between genders.

The Right, and in this context, the Fundamentalist Christian Right, is "a state of fact, and a crystallization of a body of practices and values."³⁸ Their facts are those of domination, and they prescribe and support, both in law and social order, the continuation or restoration of this domination.³⁹ They will use revolutionary means if necessary to accomplish their goals, and

CRITICAL RACE FEMINISM: AN INTERNATIONAL READER (Adrien Katherine Wing ed., 2000).

²⁹ See Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 172.

³⁰ See *id.*

³¹ See *id.*

³² See *id.*

³³ Kimberly J. Cook, *Abortion, Capital Punishment, and the Politics of "God's Will,"* 9 WM. & MARY BILL OF RTS. J. 105, 118 (2000).

³⁴ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 172.

³⁵ Cook, *supra* note 33, at 118.

³⁶ *Id.* at 115.

³⁷ See Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 172.

³⁸ See *id.* at 174.

³⁹ *Id.*

yet the revolution does not lead toward anything new.⁴⁰ Rather, it simply Balkanizes their battle for natural relations of domination.⁴¹

IV. PURPOSE

Within the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, there lies a tradition of prophesy by which members of the Christian community are called by God to bring their brothers and sisters back into a right relationship with God and one another.⁴² In the Old Testament, the Prophet Micah wrote, "He has told you, oh people, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice; and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"⁴³ In the New Testament, Jesus, denouncing the scribes, wrote of religious piety:

Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widow's houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive greater condemnation.⁴⁴

I am writing this essay to examine the effect that groups such as the Christian Coalition of America has on the discourse outside of their society. The Christian Coalition of America has wielded tremendous power in American politics and law in recent years, to the detriment of those with less power.⁴⁵ My purpose is to analyze the sexism and misogyny that is present as a constant in Right-Wing Christian discourse. May those who read this remember that pure and undefiled religion, as described by the letter of James, is "to care for orphans and widows . . ."⁴⁶

V. HOLISTIC FOCUS ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE RIGHT⁴⁷

In analyzing and deconstructing what is commonly referred to in America as the Religious Right⁴⁸ and showing that sexism is a constant in the

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² See *Call to Churches*, *supra* note 3.

⁴³ Micah 6:8 (New Revised Standard Version)

⁴⁴ Mark 12: 38-40 (New Revised Standard Version).

⁴⁵ See *Call to Churches*, *supra* note 3.

The Coalition is America's largest Christian grassroots organization with more than 2 million supporters. In the 2000 general election, Christian Coalition printed and distributed more than 70 million non-partisan voter guides to educate voters on a wide-range of candidate issues to allow them to cast an informed vote for the candidate of their choice.

Id. One example is the debate about school vouchers among low-income families. See *id.*

⁴⁶ James 1:27 (New Revised Standard Version).

⁴⁷ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 171.

⁴⁸ It is difficult to categorize this group; however, I would include everyone inclined to align

discourse of their movements, it is necessary to look at both their political and legal acts, as well as their social structure and historical background. One of the ways in which the Christian Religious Right is able to defend their position is through the performances of "self explicit political acts."⁴⁹

It is difficult to know where to begin in discussing the political order of the Religious Right, as they have agendas on so many different issues.⁵⁰ The current group wielding the most political power is the Christian Coalition of America.⁵¹ One need not look any further than their website⁵² to find a plethora of information on a variety of issues, including arguing for school prayer, against abortion, and for the preservation of marriage and family values.⁵³ The Christian Coalition of America claims to "come together for the purpose of giving a voice back to the people of faith in the democratic process."⁵⁴ The Coalition boasts of its impact on recent elections through the political activity of its members distributing "non-partisan" voter guides that give the electorate an impartial and accurate record of where potential elected officials stand on issues of importance to "pro-family" voters.⁵⁵ It solicits and encourages grass roots political participation by recruiting members of churches to become "church liaisons," leaders who guide fellow Church members in Christian citizenship.⁵⁶

On a national level, the Coalition has had a groundswell of support catching the attention of every major Republican candidate for the last thirteen 3 years.⁵⁷ The Coalition had over sixty percent of the Republican National Convention delegates in 1996 as its supporters, according to its (former) executive director, Ralph Reed.⁵⁸ To give an idea of their political agenda, the Coalition was able to influence the Republican platform in 1996 to call for the outlawing of all abortions, "even of those that are necessary to save a women's life, and even in the situation of rape or incest."⁵⁹ In an article written just after the 1996 Republican National Convention, Reed bragged of the successful work the organization had done in mobilizing

themselves with conservative and fundamentalist religious and social values and agendas.

⁴⁹ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 171.

⁵⁰ Or further discussion on this matter, see the general agenda stated by the Christian Coalition of America concerning; family politics, abortion, parental rights, tax legislation, criminal law, legislation of pornography, marriage, and religious freedom. See Call to Churches, *supra* note 3.

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ Call to Churches, *supra* note 3..

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ See Nadine Strossen, *Women's Rights Under Siege*, 73 N. DAK. L. REV. 207, 220 (1997).

⁵⁹ *Id.*

political support in the state of Texas:⁶⁰ "We have both U.S. Senators, we have the governor, we're registering more Republicans than Democrats for the first time in history."⁶¹ The governor to whom Reed refers is George W. Bush, the current President of the United States.⁶² The explicit agenda of the Christian Coalition of America is "[t]o come together to form a coalition committed to upholding the spiritual intent of the founding Father's idea of a nation under God."⁶³

Following those statements made by the Christian Coalition of America and Mr. Reed raises several questions. First, who came up with this spiritual intent? Second, who is the "founding Father?" Lastly, where is this idea of a "nation under God" that is so often cited by the Christian Coalition of America?⁶⁴ To examine these questions, one must analyze the implicit discourse, or theology influencing such political re-activism.

VI. IMPLICIT DISCOURSE INFLUENCING THE MUNDANE:⁶⁵ RECONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY

"Christian Reconstruction [has emerged] as a main theological cornerstone of modern Protestant fundamentalism," although, according to Kimberly Cook, "few contemporary evangelicals would care to admit it."⁶⁶ One mission of Reconstruction theologians is to "recapture what they deem as 'lost' in the United States, including biblical roots for everyday life, advocating a 'return to' Bible-based society, and maintaining a covenant with God."⁶⁷ "The Christian Bible would then become *the* basis for all ethics, laws, and social issues in accordance with their [very literal] interpretation of scripture."⁶⁸ According to the Reconstruction ethnologists, "everyone is at risk from 'God's' wrath because the world has entered into a state of 'moral decay,'"⁶⁹ and, thus, "humanity [must be saved] from the consequences of

⁶⁰ Strossen, *supra* note 58, at 207 n.69, 70.

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² As governor of Texas, George W. Bush adhered to the agenda of the Religious Right, restricting as much access to abortion as possible and presiding over 130 executions. *See* Cook, *supra* note 33, at 115.

⁶³ *Id.*

⁶⁴ *Id.* The Christian Coalition of America's use of the phrase "one nation under God" does not reference the Pledge of Allegiance. Their statement seems to be independent of the Pledge of Allegiance. *See* Call to Churches, *supra* note 3. For further discussion on and the actual text of the Pledge of Allegiance, see John W. Baer, *The Strange Origin of the Pledge of Allegiance*, at <http://archive.aclu.org/news/move/pledgeorigin.html>.

⁶⁵ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 171.

⁶⁶ Cook, *supra* note 33, at 118.

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *Id.* at 119 (quoting Pat Robertson, *Is America Heading for Judgment?*, at <http://www.christianity.com/cc/article/1,1183,PTID2456|CHID|CIID139721,00.html> (last visited Nov. 7, 2000)).

'Original Sin.'"⁷⁰ Their idea of Original Sin is derived from the Old Testament.⁷¹ That is, Original Sin refers to the biblical story of where Eve disobeyed God and coerced Adam into doing likewise.⁷² "Due to this transgression, namely man's association with woman [who is seen as evil], especially [Eve's] vice, the world is now in a state of chaos."⁷³ "Many fundamentalist Christians fear that the world will not survive this chaotic state and the gospel of Jesus Christ will die."⁷⁴

Among the more misogynistic features of Reconstruction Theology, as espoused by its main proponent, Rousas J. Rushdoony, the most apparent appear in his view on adultery.⁷⁵ Rushdoony argues that "[m]arried women are to be subservient to their husband's authority because women need to be protected and secured by men"⁷⁶ and a woman's welfare depends upon her submission.⁷⁷ Cook explains that the message underlying Rushdoony's statement that "[i]t is in this state of biblical submission that women will experience 'freedom' through 'God's' grace,"⁷⁸ and that "married men must lead their families as Christ leads the church."⁷⁹ In addition, Cook states that "[t]hrough this theology, 'God's' law-order is upheld by punishments against all who squander the 'order' as 'God' proclaims it."⁸⁰ For instance, when women have other ideas, or become too demanding, Rushdoony warns,

[a] woman can make no greater mistake than to assume that she can take priority in her husband's life over his work. He will love her with a personal warmth and tenderness as no other person, but a man's life is his work, not his wife, and the failure of women to understand this can do serious harm to a marriage.⁸¹

Rushdoony condemns feminism in America as the competition between men and women and prescribes a specific remedy for the return to

⁷⁰ Cook, *supra* note 33, at 120 (quoting Andrew Sandlin, *see also Join Chalcedon's Cause*, at http://www.chalcedon.edu/join_chalcedon.htm (last visited Sept. 9, 2000).

⁷¹ Genesis 3: 17-19 (New Revised Standard Version)

⁷² *Id.*

⁷³ *Id.*

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ *Id.* at 123.

⁷⁶ *See* Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 172. Guillaumin argues that relationships that are based on a power often are seen as natural complementary relationships between natural groups. *See id.* One example is that women's often subordinated position to men is seen as natural, as well as the actual groupings of women as one group is seen as a natural way of grouping people. *See id.* Instead of looking at income gaps, legislation or social norms as the source of the subordination of women, nature is used as the explanation to the position of women and their relationship to men. *See id.*

⁷⁷ Cook, *supra* note 33, at 123.

⁷⁸ *Id.* at 115 n.81.

⁷⁹ *Id.*

⁸⁰ *Id.*

⁸¹ *Id.*

biblical doctrine.⁸² The conclusion that can be drawn from Rushdoony's argument is that a wife must be her husband's help-meet.⁸³

The Reconstruction Theologians also recognize "evangelism through law."⁸⁴ They see politics as the working out of religious first principles in the civil realm.⁸⁵ "Reconstructionists . . . believe that all humans must be controlled either by 'God' or by government in order to ensure a level of 'morality.'"⁸⁶ This sort of theology provides biblical support for the idea of Christian activism, political, and otherwise.⁸⁷ This is clearly understood when we examine the leadership of the Christian Right in America today. "Fundamentalist ministers have become, thanks to television- mainline, powerful and beyond criticism. They know God, and . . . they can deliver votes. According Justin Watson's research, the Christian Coalition wants to 'bring our nation back to God,'s Will."⁸⁸ "This argument threatens religious pluralism by imposing its interpretation of 'God's will' into laws and practices of everyday life."⁸⁹ "Central to the agenda of the Christian Coalition and other like-minded organizations, are the goals of outlawing abortion rights all together and expanding the death penalty to include more offenses, perhaps even homosexuality."⁹⁰ Now one must analyze them through the lens of Guillaumin's theory as a society peculiar to relations of domination.⁹¹

VII. THE RIGHT AS AN IDEOLOGICAL FORM – OR SOCIETY PECULIAR TO RELATIONS OF DOMINATION:⁹² POLITICAL PROGRAMS AND ETHICAL PREMISES⁹³

In the Christian Coalition and other Right-Wing Groups, one can find a wealth of political action and ethical premise. I will now address how the Christian Coalition of America continues to preserve sexism and domination of women.

A. *A Society of Domination*⁹⁴

The Religious Right does have an ideal society, as articulated in its

⁸² Cook, *supra* note 33, at 123.

⁸³ *Id.*

⁸⁴ *Id.* at 129.

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ *Id.*

⁸⁷ Cook, *supra* note 33, at 123.

⁸⁸ *Id.* at 131.

⁸⁹ *Id.* at 131 n.191.

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 171.

⁹² *Id.*

⁹³ *Id.*

⁹⁴ *Id.*

Reconstruction Theology.⁹⁵ It is a society that is ruled by the infallible "Word of God" and controlled by those fortunate enough to obtain positions of power and privilege within the framework of the Bible.⁹⁶ Those who are able to obtain the positions of power and privilege are, interestingly enough, the same people who interpret the scriptures,⁹⁷ although they would disagree that they were interpreting. Instead, in the minds of the Religious Right, the Bible is the tool that God has used to proclaim the natural order by which humanity should live.⁹⁸ Within this natural order, there are certain inerrant facts of life.⁹⁹

*B. Inerrant Facts of Life – Belonging to the Natural Order*¹⁰⁰

Examples of errant facts of life include the subordination of women because they are lesser of the two sexes.¹⁰¹ Reconstruction Theologians are strict creationists, and this fact of life can be traced back to the first book of the Old Testament, Genesis.¹⁰² There, God finds that Adam is lonely, so God puts Adam to sleep and takes one of his ribs to form Eve to be a helper or help-meet for Adam.¹⁰³ Later on, Eve commits the Original Sin by eating the apple from the Tree of Life and successfully tempting Adam to do the same. It is often Eve's punishment that is highlighted.¹⁰⁴ Eve becomes the imperfect, subordinate, inferior sex.¹⁰⁵

The Original Sin story sets the stage for two millennia of domination by men and oppression of women. The woman is has been set up by natural order to play the subordinate role and is required to call upon man for her forgiveness and protection from harm.¹⁰⁶ However, in the minds of the Religious Right, this dynamic is the natural order that has been prescribed by the Bible, which is infallible.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁵ Cook, *supra* note 33, at 115.

⁹⁶ *Id.*

⁹⁷ Male pastors and theologians. See Cook referring to a "celebration of (white) heterosexual masculinity, both in terms of superiority over others and as a barometer of "normalcy" and "reasonableness" within the context of decision making." *Id.* at 116.

⁹⁸ *Id.* at 120.

⁹⁹ See Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 172.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ See Cook, *supra* note 33, at 120.

¹⁰² *Id.*

¹⁰³ It is interesting to note that God creates the woman with a womb, so that humanity can procreate without God's direct intervention in the future. Genesis 3:17-19.

¹⁰⁴ However, both man and woman are punished with banishment from the Garden and consequently become mortal. *Id.* Also, Adam is made to toil for his entire earthly life. *Id.*

¹⁰⁵ See Cook at 120.

¹⁰⁶ See *id.* at 123.

¹⁰⁷ *Id.*

C. *The Facts are Right and Must be Maintained as They Are*¹⁰⁸

Beyond, and deriving from, the superior view placed upon literal interpretation of the Bible, "there exists within fundamentalist Christianity a celebration of (white) heterosexual masculinity, both in terms of superiority over others and as a barometer of 'normalcy' and 'reasonableness' within the context of decision-making."¹⁰⁹ "The fundamentalist mind has a low tolerance for ambiguity."¹¹⁰ Therefore, "distinctions between male and female are seen as cornerstones upon which Creation rests."¹¹¹ Cook observes, "[t]o deny these fundamental distinctions between men and women, then, would require fundamentalists to embrace in gay rights and abortion rights; denial of those rights is one means by which the distinctions between male and female are maintained."¹¹² Furthermore, these distinctions serve as the means by which the Right argues that domination, exploitation, and inequality are actually socially necessary.¹¹³

This way of treating domination, exploitation, and inequality as socially necessary and even sanctioned by God's will¹¹⁴ reveals the underlying ideology of domination, exploitation, and inequality is best illustrated by the fundamentalist Christians' views on abortion and the death penalty.¹¹⁵ In order to understand these issues from their perspective, one must see them through the lens of the politics of God's will. Fundamentalists generally view God in traditionally masculine and judgmental terms, leading them to believe that punishment is justified as a means of enforcing "Godly" order.¹¹⁶ Consequently, people are then punished merely "for their membership in certain demographic groups."¹¹⁷ "Women are punished for failing to be 'proper' women, and [j]ust being a woman is a crime."¹¹⁸ According to Gerald E. Straub, a former 700 Club insider,¹¹⁹ Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, would have the government act as God's law enforcement agent on earth, because "there is no reason to wait for Hell to start punishing sinners . . . [when they could] . . . throw them into the slammer now."¹²⁰ Furthermore, conservative and fundamental civil religion

¹⁰⁸ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 172.

¹⁰⁹ Cook, *supra* note 33, at 116.

¹¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹¹ *Id.*

¹¹² Cook, *supra* note 33, at 116-17.

¹¹³ *Id.* at 123.

¹¹⁴ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 172.

¹¹⁵ *See* Cook, *supra* note 33, at 114.

¹¹⁶ *Id.*

¹¹⁷ *Id.*

¹¹⁸ *Id.* at 115.

¹¹⁹ Cook, *supra* note 33, at 114-15 (citing GERALD T. STRAUB, SALVATION FOR SALE: AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF PAT ROBERTSON'S MINISTRY 42 (1986)).

¹²⁰ *Id.*

also sanctifies the American economic order, which is dominated by white men.¹²¹ Capitalism, an exploiting, dominating, oppressive economic order is praised for being fundamentally biblical.¹²² George Gilder, a man identifying himself as an evangelical Christian, argues, "[g]ive and you'll be given unto is the fundamental principle of the Christian life, and when there is no private property you cannot give it because you don't own it."¹²³ He further reasons that socialism is inherently hostile to Christianity, and that capitalism is simply the essential mode of human life that corresponds to religious truth.¹²⁴ Pat Robertson draws upon Gilder's work to arrive at the conclusion that "free enterprise is the economic system most nearly meeting humanity's God-given need for freedom."¹²⁵ Jerry Falwell, former leader of the Moral Majority,¹²⁶ gives American capitalism a divine sanction, "God is in favor of freedom, property ownership, competition, diligence, work, and acquisition. All of this is taught in the Word of God in both the Old and New Testaments."¹²⁷ The thought that this system of free market capitalism is oppressive to individual impoverished women, both domestically and internationally, does not even cross these men's minds. It is just a socially necessary part of maintaining the order that God has ordained.

This theory is extended into reality when we move into the homes of fundamentalist and conservative Christians. Religious advocates have explicitly sanctioned violence as a mean of keeping women in their proper place in the home.¹²⁸ The following antidote provides a chilling example:

One woman sought shelter from her abusive husband in the home of a friend. One afternoon, the woman's husband and the minister of the church to which the couple belonged came to the safe place where the woman was staying. The minister shouted from the yard that the woman should return to her husband because it was God's will that couples should stay together. The owner of the house had to threaten them with prosecution for trespassing to make them leave. It was later discovered that the minister would take his own wife out into the woods and beat her.¹²⁹

This exploitation and domination of women is constantly reinforced as

¹²¹ Derek H. Davis, *Law and the Sacred: Competing Notions of American Civil Religion*, 5 L. TEXT CULTURE 265, 271 (2000).

¹²² *Id.*

¹²³ *Id.*

¹²⁴ *Id.*

¹²⁵ *Id.*

¹²⁶ A predecessor to the Christian Coalition formed in the late 1960's.

¹²⁷ Davis, *supra* note 121, at 271.

¹²⁸ Linda L. Ammons, *What's God Got to do with it? Church and State Collaboration in the Subordination of Women and Domestic Violence*, 51 RUTGERS L. REV. 1207, 1209 (1999).

¹²⁹ *Id.* at 1208-09.

not only socially necessary, but sanctioned to be God's divine will.¹³⁰

*D. The Relations of Domination are Both Obvious and Invisible*¹³¹

The way in which the Fundamentalist Christian Right makes the domination of men invisible is the same way that any Right-Wing discourse does so. The Right veils the domination by arguing that it is a natural dynamic designed by God.¹³² In the case of fundamentalist Christian groups, the literal interpretation of the Bible is their natural law and it sets up the natural order and relations among men and women. This dynamic between the sexes is treated as fundamental and incontrovertible evidence of the way things should be.¹³³

The natural continuation of this thought process renders the relationship dynamic between the sexes a non-political issue.¹³⁴ The only time that it becomes acceptable for gender relations to be a political issue is when it maintains the natural relation between the two genders. Therefore, activism regarding the preservation of marriage, the family, and of women's place as a reproductive social subject is deemed to be permissible. These relations are not considered worthy of criticism or to be analyzed as political issues.¹³⁵

When examining the Congressional report cards and voter guides of Senators and Congress members on the Christian Coalition's website, no grade is given for issues such as domestic violence, human rights, and reproductive freedom.¹³⁶ These issues, which are core political issues for many American women, are not even mentioned within the agenda of this Right-Wing group.¹³⁷ For the issue of domestic violence, in particular, Right-Wing "religious institutions are among the last to recognize their role in what is both a crime and a public health epidemic."¹³⁸

Similarly, the evangelical group Promise Keepers, founded by former University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney, has been criticized for what is missing from its agenda.¹³⁹ The group's focus includes committing to "strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical

¹³⁰ See Cook, *supra* note 33, at 123.

¹³¹ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 173.

¹³² *Id.*

¹³³ *Id.*

¹³⁴ *Id.*

¹³⁵ *Id.*

¹³⁶ *Call to Churches*, *supra* note 3.

¹³⁷ Some issues, such as reproductive freedom, are even antithetical to the agenda of the Religious Right. *Id.*

¹³⁸ Ammons, *supra* note 128, at 1210.

¹³⁹ *Id.* at 1288.

values."¹⁴⁰ However, many critics have alleged that keeping women subordinate to men is a primary goal of the organization.¹⁴¹ In its discussions of domestic violence, "[t]here is no mention of men's responsibility for violence against women and children; there is no promise to stop hitting, raping, and harassing women and to stop abusing children."¹⁴² Nor have other Right-Wing Christian groups have not addressed domestic violence.¹⁴³ Because the agendas of Right-Wing Christian Groups focus on the family, their failure to address domestic violence against women and children suggests that they do not consider it important.¹⁴⁴ However, the Right-Wing labels relations between men and women as social relations bearing a great deal of importance on their *own terms*.

Furthermore, religious organizations were not participants in the consideration of The Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA") in Congress from 1990-1994.¹⁴⁵ "While six hearings on the topic of violence against women were conducted, no identifiable religious organizations on record at the hearings either supported or opposed the legislation."¹⁴⁶ "Congress appropriated monies to be administered by the Justice Department for programs designed to stop domestic violence."¹⁴⁷ "As of December of 1996, not one religiously affiliated group had applied for funding."¹⁴⁸

VIII. THE RIGHT'S PRESENTATION OF SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MALES AND FEMALES AS NATURAL RELATIONS¹⁴⁹

When one visits the Christian Coalition's website and looks up their congressional report cards of United States legislators, one finds ratings about each legislator on issues concerning the defense of family values, abortion, fetal tissue research, and freedom of religion.¹⁵⁰ Their biblically based view of male and female relations fosters their belief that the current state of male and female relations is natural.¹⁵¹ Fundamentalist religious

¹⁴⁰ *The Official Web Page of the Promise Keepers: Men of Integrity*, at <http://www.promisekeepers.org/faqs/core/faqscore24.htm> (last visited Mar. 1, 2003) [hereinafter Promise Keepers]. "[S]trong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values" is listed as the fourth out of seven promises the organization makes. *Id.*

¹⁴¹ Ammons, *supra* note 128, at 1288.

¹⁴² *Id.*

¹⁴³ *Id.*

¹⁴⁴ See generally *Call to Churches*, *supra* note 3; Promise Keepers, *supra* note 140.

¹⁴⁵ Ammons, *supra* note 128, at 1266-67.

¹⁴⁶ *Id.*

¹⁴⁷ *Id.*

¹⁴⁸ *Id.*

¹⁴⁹ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 173.

¹⁵⁰ *Call to Churches*, *supra* note 3.

¹⁵¹ Cook, *supra* note 33, at 123.

groups encourage or require women to fulfill traditional roles, to be economically dependent upon their husbands, and to serve others within their home.¹⁵² As a result of requiring women to maintain their economic dependence on individual men, the women's position in the marriage is weakened.¹⁵³ Thus, "[t]he combination of traditional roles and fundamentalists' unusually strong emphasis on family stability lessens fundamentalist women's ability to object to traditional relationships between the sexes."¹⁵⁴

IX. THIS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SEXES IS TREATED AS FUNDAMENTAL AND INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE¹⁵⁵

Fundamentalist Christians continue to teach, both explicitly and implicitly that women should be subordinate to men.¹⁵⁶ "For example, fundamentalist Christians still often state overtly that wives should submit to husbands."¹⁵⁷ In *The Total Woman*, Maribel Morgan describes the "biblical remedy for marital conflict:" "wives must submit to their husbands' leadership in the same way that they submit to the Lord," citing the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians.¹⁵⁸

A. *Examples Through the Elevation of the Traditional Family*¹⁵⁹

The Christian Fundamentalist Right's emphasis on family stability reinforces the current advantages of power and leisure that men enjoy within families.¹⁶⁰ Fundamentalist religion encourages women to live with the status quo rather than destabilizing it by insisting upon equality.¹⁶¹

The Christian Coalition maintains a family values agenda as well, which calls for the outlawing of all abortions, and "systematically attack[s] judicial decisions and government programs that advance women's rights."¹⁶² In the name of family values, the Coalition has attacked affirmative action programs that help women move into the workforce.¹⁶³ Their agenda, as described by Nadine Strossen, would force women to conform to the "conventional

¹⁵² Mary E. Becker, *The Politics of Women's Wrongs and the Bill of 'Rights': A Bicentennial Perspective*, 59 U. CHI. L. REV. 453, 464 (1992).

¹⁵³ *Id.*

¹⁵⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵⁵ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 174.

¹⁵⁶ Becker, *supra* note 152, at 483.

¹⁵⁷ *Id.* at 464.

¹⁵⁸ Becker, *supra* note 152, at 483 (citing MARIBEL MORGAN, *THE TOTAL WOMAN* 69 (Revell 1973) (quoting *The Living Bible* Ephesians 5:22 (Tyndale House, 1971))).

¹⁵⁹ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 174.

¹⁶⁰ Becker, *supra* note 152, at 483.

¹⁶¹ *Id.*

¹⁶² Strossen, *supra* note 58, at 220.

¹⁶³ *Id.*

morality" of the "traditional American family."¹⁶⁴ In addition, Ralph Reed, former Coalition director, has argued that the Legal Services Corporation¹⁶⁵ should be abolished because it is undermining traditional American values by representing poor people in domestic disputes and therefore subsidizing divorce and illegitimacy.¹⁶⁶ Finally, the Christian Coalition went as far as to propose a "Contract with the American Family" to Congress in 1996, which opposed all abortions.¹⁶⁷

*B. Confinement of Women to Reproductive Materiality—A Prerequisite to any Right-Wing Position*¹⁶⁸

Women's issues within the Religious Right discourse are centered on their reproductive materiality. This is because women are seen as intrinsically tied to their ability to reproduce and keep a home for their husbands. All attention toward women is focused within the scope of their ability to reproduce and other subsequent duties to maintain the home that they have made. This emphasis is demonstrated in the Right's views on both reproductive rights and welfare reform.¹⁶⁹ In addition to keeping women in the home to procreate, the Religious Right also seeks to continue the confinement of women to reproductive materiality by ending any progress toward women's reproductive freedom.¹⁷⁰ Examples of measures included in this legislation are severe limitations on abortions, including RU-486, commonly known as "the morning after pill" and withdrawal of Medicaid funding for abortions.¹⁷¹

The confinement of poor women to reproductive materiality would prevent these women may poor from receiving funds to obtain an abortion as well as denying them funding to give birth to babies at all.¹⁷² As Nadine Strossen stated, "[t]hese measures clearly seek to curtail childbearing by

¹⁶⁴ *Id.*

¹⁶⁵ Legal Services Corporation is the primary source of legal aid for low-income Americans.

¹⁶⁶ Strossen, *supra* note 58, at 220.

¹⁶⁷ *Id.* at 226.

¹⁶⁸ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 174.

¹⁶⁹ *See Call to Churches, supra* note 3.

The Christian Coalition of America supports the enactment of the Women and Children's Resources Act. By providing federal funding for the services that crisis pregnancy centers, adoption agencies, and maternity homes provide to women faced with an untimely pregnancy, this legislation will channel federal dollars towards ensuring that help and support are available to women in their time of need. Far too many women today who underwent abortions, lament that they underwent the abortion because they believed that there was no one they could rely on to help them keep their baby.

Id.

¹⁷⁰ *See* Strossen, *supra* note 58, at 226.

¹⁷¹ *Id.* at 226-27.

¹⁷² *Id.* at 228.

welfare recipients at the very same time that cutbacks on abortion services seek to curtail their abortions."¹⁷³ This logically leaves poor women with only one choice, abstinence or celibacy.¹⁷⁴ Since this abstinence is considered a virtue by the Religious Right, it is deemed as an acceptable solution.¹⁷⁵ This solution, however, results in a double standard for men and women where women deemed virtuous if they abstain from sex but men suffer no moral consequences for their sexual behavior.¹⁷⁶ However, within the constructs of the Religious Right's discourse, this double standard is acceptable because the ideal woman is the Virgin Mary, a woman who procreated without making herself unclean through sexual contact.¹⁷⁷

X. THE RIGHT AS A STATE OF FACT: A CRYSTALLIZATION OF PRACTICES AND VALUES¹⁷⁸

The Christian Coalition will now serve to illustrate the Religious Right as a state of Fact in American politics. As will be shown, its practices and values have become an undeniable influence in the laws and government of the United States.

A. *The Statement of Facts*¹⁷⁹

According to the Mission of the Christian Coalition, the Christian Coalition of America was founded to give Christians a voice in government.¹⁸⁰ They "believe that people of faith have a right and a responsibility to be involved in the world around them."¹⁸¹ Their involvement includes community, social, and political action.¹⁸² The goals of the Coalition include strengthening the family, protecting innocent human life, returning education to local and parental control, easing the tax burden on families, defending the institution of marriage, and protecting religious freedom.¹⁸³ Pat Robertson, in his "message from the [Coalition's] founder," proclaims the group to be "a coalition of pro-family Roman Catholics, evangelicals, and other people of faith working together to become the unified voice of families in America."¹⁸⁴

¹⁷³ *Id.*

¹⁷⁴ Strossen, *supra* note 58, at 228.

¹⁷⁵ *Id.*

¹⁷⁶ *Id.* at 127.

¹⁷⁷ *Id.* at 128.

¹⁷⁸ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 174.

¹⁷⁹ *Id.*

¹⁸⁰ *See generally Call to Churches, supra* note 3.

¹⁸¹ *See id.*

¹⁸² *Id.*

¹⁸³ *Id.*

¹⁸⁴ *Id.*

Implicit within the founder's message and the mission of the organization, lie several assumptions of fact, as previously discussed, presuppose a society of domination. For example, the Coalition's views on strengthening the family encourage people to keep family together at all costs and obscure issues such as domestic violence and child abuse to the side. Similarly, the Coalition's defense of marriage suggests that women should remain oppressed by men.

XI. THE PRESCRIPTION—THAT ORDER MUST BE PERPETUATED¹⁸⁵

Pat Robertson and his organization call upon Christians to represent the "Pro-Family" point of view before local councils, school boards, state legislatures, and Congress.¹⁸⁶ In addition, the group calls on their members to speak out in the public arena and the media, to train leaders for effective social and political action, inform pro-family voters about timely issues and legislation, "protest anti-Christianity bigotry and defend the rights of people of faith."¹⁸⁷ Such actions call for the maintaining of the Religious Right's order. The 'Pro-Family' ideological position has its roots in Fundamentalist Christianity.

In order to understand the implicit perpetuation of male domination in the pro-family argument, one must define fundamentalism:

Fundamentalism refers to the belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contain the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil which must be vigorously fought; that truth must be followed today according to fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past; and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity.¹⁸⁸

When coupled with political activism, fundamentalist Christianity seeks to intervene and interpose their values onto the rest of America to create a Theocracy.

One example of legislation that points to this proposition is the Defense of Marriage Act ("DOMA").¹⁸⁹ Passed by Congress in 1996, this

¹⁸⁵ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 174.

¹⁸⁶ *Call to Churches*, *supra* note 3.

¹⁸⁷ See *the Mission Statement of The Christian Coalition website*. *Call to Churches*, *supra* note 3.

¹⁸⁸ James A. Donovan, *DOMA: An Unconstitutional Establishment of Fundamentalist Christianity*, 4 MICH. J. GENDER & L. 335, 338 n.12 (1997).

¹⁸⁹ 28 U.S.C. § 1738C (2002). "The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) does two things. First, it provides that no State shall be required to give effect to a law of any other State with respect to a same-sex "marriage." Second, it defines the words "marriage" and "spouse" for purposes of Federal law." This definition has been provided by The 'Lectric Law Library, which is available at: <http://www.lectlaw.com>. The meaning of "spouse" in DOMA is to be interpreted as a person of the opposite sex, in other words only heterosexual couples can be recognized as being

statute was a product of a well-organized Religious Right.¹⁹⁰ As Randall Terry, founder of anti-abortion group Operation Rescue, preached to his constituents at the time of passage, "I want you to let a wave of intolerance wash over you. Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a biblical duty; we are called by God, to conquer this country. We don't want equal time, we don't want pluralism."¹⁹¹ The DOMA was a short document, but packed quite a legal punch, as it authorized states to ignore the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the United States Constitution when it comes to the issue of same-sex marriages.¹⁹²

No state, territory, or possession of the United States, or Indian tribe, shall be required to give effect to any public act, record, or judicial proceeding of any other State, territory, possession, or tribe respecting a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other State, territory, possession, or tribe, or a right or claim arising from such relationship.¹⁹³

"DOMA was motivated and supported by fundamentalist Christian ideology, and lacking in any genuine secular goals or justifications."¹⁹⁴ DOMA appears to be facially inconsistent with the United States Constitution. Many scholars have argued that the Fundamentalist Christian Right's attempts to maintain their order and make a "Christian Nation" have potentially violated the Equal Protection clause as well.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, some have argued that DOMA also violates the Establishment clause of the First Amendment.¹⁹⁶ DOMA states that:

In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States, the word "marriage" means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word "spouse" refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife.¹⁹⁷

constituted by two "spouses." *Id.*

¹⁹⁰ Donovan, *supra* note 188, at 372.

¹⁹¹ *Id.* Donovan argues that DOMA is a "predominately a religious prejudice" and, therefore, a violates the Anti-Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution. *See id.*

¹⁹² *Id.* at 337.

¹⁹³ § 1738C.

¹⁹⁴ Donovan, *supra* note 188, at 338.

¹⁹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁹⁷ 1 U.S.C. § 7 (2002).

XII. THE RIGHT'S USE OF ACTIVISM—REVOLUTIONARY MEASURES¹⁹⁸

Fundamentalist Christian groups have used radical protests and other "civil disobedience" to maintain the natural order of domination and repression.¹⁹⁹ They have gone to extreme heights in their display of brutality in order to have more conformity with the natural relations, even calling the murders of abortion doctors "justifiable homicide."

A. *(Re)-Activism for the Sake of the Status Quo or to Return to Fundamental Values*²⁰⁰

Fundamentalist Christians activism began in 1979 with the rise of the Moral Majority.²⁰¹ By 1980, the Moral Majority had an operating budget of \$56 million, which it used to defeat U.S. Senators and innumerable local officials.²⁰² Tim LaHaye, an evangelical pastor, put out the call for the Christian vote, encouraging Christians to register, participate in the campaigns of "pro-moral" candidates, and run for office themselves.²⁰³ Senator Jesse Helms and LaHaye refer to secular humanism as the most serious threat to our nation in its entire history.²⁰⁴

Secular humanism²⁰⁵ includes an "irrelevance of Deity, the supremacy of human reason, the inevitability of human progress, and the autonomy and centrality of man."²⁰⁶ Fundamentalist Christians, such as Jerry Falwell, have gone as far as to say that humanism is a religion.²⁰⁷ An Alabama federal court judge agreed with this idea and ruled that secular humanism constituted a religion for First Amendment purposes.²⁰⁸ This fight against "secular humanism" expanded into issue based activism in the 1980's and 1990's.

Abortion and family values became the central issues around which Fundamentalist Christian Activism rallied. Anti-abortion activities, such as

¹⁹⁸ Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 174.

¹⁹⁹ For an example of "filibustery," see *Call to Churches*, *supra* note 3.

²⁰⁰ See generally Guillaumin, *supra* note 1.

²⁰¹ Ammons, *supra* note 128, at 1288.

²⁰² *Id.*

²⁰³ *Id.*

²⁰⁴ *Id.* at 1288 n.29.

²⁰⁵ Secular Humanism is what the Right-Wing calls a political stand against a practice of religion. The Right Wing assert that non-religious practice is itself a practice of religious anti-religion. See *Smith v. Bd. of Sch. Comm'rs*, 655 F. Supp. 939 (S.D. Ala. 1987). A group of parents claimed the Secular Humanism was a religion and should therefore not be taught in public schools. See *id.* The Court ruled that Secular Humanism met the criteria of a religion and was therefore unconstitutional. See *id.*

²⁰⁶ *Id.*

²⁰⁷ Ammons, *supra* note 128 at 1288

²⁰⁸ See *Smith*, 655 F. Supp. 939.

Operation Save America,²⁰⁹ provide an example of Christian activism, using radical measures and civil disobedience to block entrances to abortion clinics and effectively shut them down.²¹⁰ On the legislative front, the Right continuously lobbies representatives on Capitol Hill, as well as local school boards, to institute or preserve their values and policies.²¹¹

*B. Revolutionary Measures for the Purpose of Restoring a Greater Measure of Conformity*²¹²

Despite their theoretical adherence to the law, some people aligned with Fundamentalist Christian groups have gone to extraordinary measures to make sure that their order is maintained. In the later part of the 1990's, woman's health care centers that provided abortions and information on abortion suffered over \$6 million dollars in damage.²¹³ In just over one year, three doctors were brutally assaulted by gun-wielding anti-abortion proponents.²¹⁴ Two of the doctors died, along with two other young women working as clinic receptionists and volunteer clinic escorts.²¹⁵ Surprisingly, the anti-abortion activist movements praised the murders of the doctors.²¹⁶ "Rescue America called them a 'legitimate' use of force." "Defensive Action labeled life-threatening attacks as 'justifiable assault.'"²¹⁷ Advocates for Life Ministries supports justifiable homicide of abortion doctors as well.²¹⁸ By advocating such violent and extreme means for protesting abortion, the activists who align themselves with the values of Fundamentalist Christianity are able to strengthen the foundation of their position and society of domination. Out of fear, the number of abortion doctors will most likely severely decreased and the existing ways of domination and oppression of women remain in tact.

²⁰⁹ Operation Save America is a militant anti-abortionist organization. For further information on this group, see generally www.operationrescue.org.

²¹⁰ See generally CAROL MASON, NARRATIVE OF PRO-LIFE POLITICS (2002). Mason gives a summary of the activities of the Pro-Life Movement in the last decades. See also Strossen, *supra* note 58, at 225.

²¹¹ "The Christian Coalition of America opposes the use of federal tax dollars to fund foreign organizations that perform abortions overseas or work to legalize abortion overseas." May 7, 2001 Letter, *supra* note 5.

²¹² Guillaumin, *supra* note 1, at 174.

²¹³ Strossen, *supra* note 58, at 225.

²¹⁴ *Id.*

²¹⁵ *Id.*

²¹⁶ *Id.*

²¹⁷ *Id.* The Rescue America is a militant anti-abortion organization. For further information on this group, see their website <http://www.operationrescue.org/>. Defensive Action has been used to justify the murdering of abortion doctors. Strossen, *supra* note 58, at 225. Advocates for Life Ministries ("ALM") advocates for the justifiable of homicides of abortion doctors. *Id.*

²¹⁸ Strossen, *supra* note 58, at 225.

XIII. CONCLUSION

As long as the Right-Wing groups are steeped in tradition of Fundamentalist Christianity and are active only to preserve the fundamental society of domination that is implicit within the movement, sexism will always be an underlying value within its discourse. Through the smoke and mirrors of a family values agenda, the Right hides their Reconstructionist roots, which are without substance.²¹⁹ Reconstructionists have lost sight of important religious tenants of confession, redemption, and forgiveness as primary acts of faith, all the while passing judgment and condemnation on others because they perceive themselves as above reproach.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Cook, *supra* note 33 at 120.

²²⁰ *Id.* at 113.

PART II: INTIMATE VIOLENCE

